

REPUBLIC OF VERMONT ■ WHO KILLED GENERAL MOTORS?

DECEMBER 19, 2005

The American Conservative

BLACK

VS.

BROWN

Diversity in the New L.A.

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AMERICA IS SELLING OUT

Log onto our website <www.economyincrisis.org> to view the many additional thousands of major American corporations sold to foreign interests since 1979.

It is critical to understand that even if these are not all familiar corporate names, they are all very valuable strategic companies with vast amounts of technology, assets, production facilities, tax base, and employment attached to each one. In fact, many of the smallest, most unfamiliar acquisitions represent some of the most significant strategic and proprietary technology losses to this country. Many of these companies took decades, and in some cases generations, to build to their size and scope prior to acquisition. Not only does the US lose control of the assets and technologies of these companies as of the date they were acquired, the US also loses all future profit and title to all future advancements of these companies.

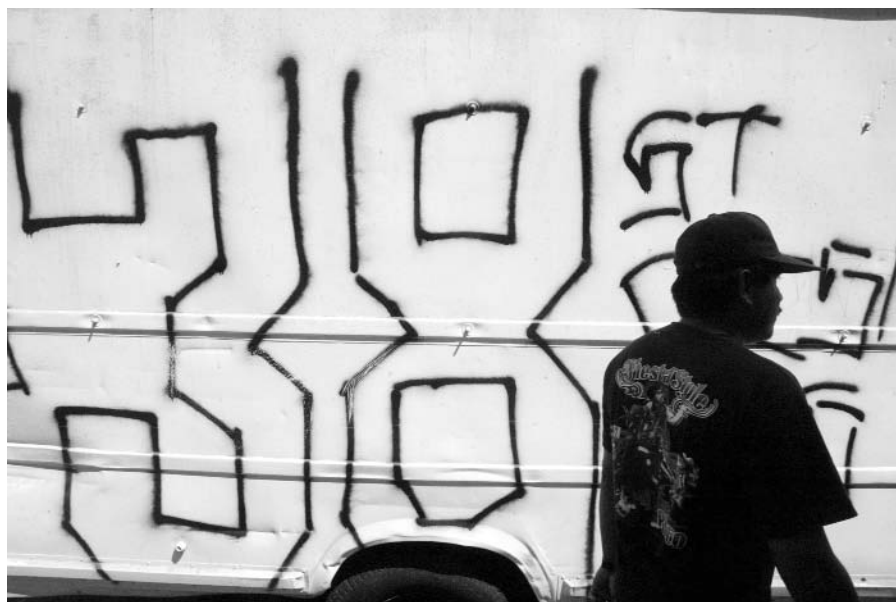
These companies were the means through which America created much of its present wealth. With the loss of these companies and having no comparable replacement, it's easy to see that our future will not be as good as our past, especially since the countries that acquired these companies are now able to compete with us in almost all industries. Why are we doing this? Don't we have alternatives? Who is responsible, demand answers from your congressperson.

The following table lists only a few of the 8,600 foreign acquisitions during this period. These statistics can be verified at the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

FORMER AMERICAN CORP	NEW FOREIGN OWNER	PURCHASING COUNTRY	AMOUNT PAID
Amoco Corp	British Petroleum Co	United Kingdom	\$48.174 Billion
Arco	BP Amoco	United Kingdom	\$27.224 Billion
AirTouch Communications	Vodafone Group	United Kingdom	\$60.287 Billion
VoiceStream Wireless	Deutsche Telekom AG	Germany	\$29.404 Billion
Chrysler Corp	Daimler-Benz AG	Germany	\$40.466 Billion
Simon & Schuster	Pearson PLC	United Kingdom	\$4.600 Billion
Household International	HSBC Holdings	United Kingdom	\$15.294 Billion
CIT Group Inc	Tyco International Ltd	Bermuda	\$9.341 Billion
PacifiCorp	Scottish Power PLC	United Kingdom	\$12.600 Billion
Niagara Mohawk Holdings	National Grid Group PLC	United Kingdom	\$8.048 Billion
Ernst & Young	Cap Gemini SA	France	\$11.774 Billion
MCI Communications	Cable & Wireless PLC	United Kingdom	\$1.750 Billion
Knight-Ridder Information	MAID PLC	United Kingdom	\$0.420 Billion
MCA Inc	Matsushita Electric	Japan	\$7.406 Billion
Columbia Pictures	Sony USA Inc	Japan	\$4.792 Billion
MGM/UA Communications	Pathe Communications	Luxembourg	\$1.709 Billion
Firestone Tire & Rubber	Bridgestone Corp	Japan	\$2.533 Billion
Uniroyal Goodrich Tire Co	Michelin SA	France	\$1.500 Billion
Miller Brewing	South African Breweries	United Kingdom	\$5.574 Billion
International Steel Group	Ispat International	Netherlands	\$3.813 Billion
PaineWebber Group Inc	UBS AG	Switzerland	\$12.243 Billion
Aetna-Financial Services	ING Group NV	Netherlands	\$4.933 Billion
PIMCO Advisor Holdings	Allianz AG	Germany	\$1.930 Billion
Bankers Trust New York	Deutsche Bank AG	Germany	\$8.082 Billion
SmithKline Beckman Corp	Beecham Group PLC	United Kingdom	\$7.922 Billion
Chiron Diagnostics Corp	Bayer AG	Germany	\$1.100 Billion
IBM Corp - Hard Disk Drive	Hitachi Ltd	Japan	\$2.050 Billion
IBM Personal Computers	Lenovo	Hong Kong	\$1.751 Billion
Houghton Mifflin Co	Vivendi Universal	France	\$2.272 Billion
Random House Inc	Bertelsmann AG	Germany	\$1.300 Billion
Doubleday Publishing	Bertelsmann AG	Germany	\$0.500 Billion
John Hancock Financial	Manulife Financial	Canada	\$11.063 Billion
TransAmerica Corp	Aegon NV	Netherlands	\$9.691 Billion
United Defense Industries	BAE Systems	United Kingdom	\$4.199 Billion

To view additional companies sold go to www.EconomyInCrisis.org.

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LA OPINION PHOTOS

[MULTICULTURALISM]

End of the Rainbow

BY ROGER D. MCGRATH Blacks lose the most ground in Los Angeles' ongoing Hispanicization. **Page 7**

[IMMIGRATION]

French Lessons

BY STEVE SAILER The nation that neocons most love to hate has followed their immigration prescriptions—to devastating results. **Page 11**

[IDEAS]

Free Vermont

BY BILL KAUFFMAN The Green Mountain State's secession movement brings together hippie greens and libertarian gun owners. **Page 16**

[POLITICS]

Diminishing Returns

BY W. JAMES ANTLE III Tax cuts and liberal-baiting may no longer be a surefire electoral strategy for the GOP. **Page 22**

COLUMNS

6 Patrick J. Buchanan: The Death of Economic Patriotism

24 William Pfaff: Once-imperial Britain learns to kowtow.

35 Taki: The president should read *The Prince*.

NEWS & VIEWS

4 Fourteen Days: Murtha-Hagel '08; Republicans' loose construction of the Magna Carta; Edwards feels heat, sees light

21 Deep Background: Businessmen cash out of Syria; Chechen mob supplies al-Qaeda; Argentina's bungled counter-terrorism

ARTICLES

13 Leon Hadar: Karen Hughes brings the gospel of Bush to the heathen masses.

20 John Zmirak: A blessed Santaclaustide to one and all!

ARTS & LETTERS

26 Steve Sailer: "Rent" doesn't pay.

27 Scott McConnell: *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* by George Packer

29 Gary Brecher: *A War Like No Other* by Victor Davis Hanson

32 Howard Sutherland: *The 50% American: Immigration and National Identity in the Age of Terror* by Stanley A. Renshon

[POLITICS]

THE MURTHA MOMENT

Six months ago, there was no antiwar movement to speak of. An infant resistance had nearly experienced crib death somewhere between Howard Dean's scream and John Kerry's enervating campaign. Americans paid no more heed to the Iraq War than they do to a failing TV series. Then arrived Cindy Sheehan, a decent symbol at best, hardly wise and barely a leader, but a necessary galvanizing spark. Now arises Congressman John Murtha—Marine veteran and war hero, Democratic hawk and one of the voices in Congress most respected by the U.S. military—pointing out in language both passionate and precise that our presence in Iraq is a failure and that the longer we stay, the worse it gets.

Murtha's speech brought other business in the House to a halt as Republicans engaged in a desperate effort at damage control. But the political damage to Bush had long since been done and is now as irreparable as the harm that his war has inflicted upon American security and stature in the world. Nearly 60 percent of Americans now doubt the integrity of the president, and the public trust, quipped pollster John Zogby, is "kind of like virginity. It's hard to get back."

Having no real answer to questions about the administration's stovepiping of hyped and false intelligence to rush the country into war and no real response to questions about the war's progress other than flag-bedecked exhortations to "stay the course," Bush and "five deferment" Cheney attacked, charging that questioning the war is sabotaging the war effort. The truth is otherwise: the blind continuation of a flawed policy is sabotaging America's effort to defeat Islamic terrorism. The longer it continues, the weaker our military gets, the more damage is done to America's reputation, and the more ter-



rorists are able to embed themselves among Iraqis who simply reject the foreign occupation of their country.

Just as John Murtha was right, so Chuck Hagel, the most courageous Republican in the Senate, was right to note that it is "unpatriotic" in a democracy not to question the government. In Iraq, America is on the wrong track, but at home, to go from nothing to Sheehan to Murtha and Hagel is progress indeed.

[OCCUPATION]

LIONS' DEN

A glance at a *Washington Post* piece last week suggested that it would be of a type we saw regularly in the run-up to war in Iraq. An escapee of Saddam's shop of horrors would relate a gruesome tale of abuse at the tyrant's hand, and American sympathies would convulse. Much as *TAC* questioned the political wisdom and general morality of an invasion and occupation, on a human level we shared the nation's disgust at the dictator's atrocities.

This story thus felt familiar. Beneath the soulful photograph of two rescued Iraqis, painful recollections: "tortured and degraded for months"; "shoved in a lion's cage at one of the presidential

palaces"; "lined ... up for a mock execution." The disgust rose again. Then doubled—"Sherzad Khalid, 35, and Thahe Sabber, 37, say they were brutally beaten over several months at U.S. facilities. ... They said the abuse occurred when they were unable to tell U.S. troops where Saddam Hussein was hiding and did not know about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq."

The Pentagon puts little stock in their allegations—"[I]t should not surprise anyone that detainees would make false allegations against their captors," spokesman Bryan Whitman told the *Post*. But imperial history shows that subduing a colony requires an essential brutality—noble intentions notwithstanding. So while it may be that Khalid and Sabber are master fantasists, greater gifts of imagination belong to those who thought we could enter this desert crucible as we did and emerge with our national integrity unscathed.

[JUSTICE]

KAFKA CALL YOUR OFFICE

The democracy we advocate abroad took a shot to its core last month when the U.S. Senate voted to suspend *habeas corpus*—that most basic of rights—for

those the president designates “unlawful combatants.”

Some will argue that the guarantee of due process belongs only to American citizens and that Guantanamo’s men without countries don’t qualify. But the notion that a government cannot indefinitely hold its opponents without charge long predates our Constitution, tracing its lineage to English common law. Moreover, *habeas corpus* affirms an American ideal, not just about the way we treat our own, but about how we regard justice more generally. We cannot create special cases without damage to that principle.

This is not to say that the detainees are innocent—only that those who have been held three and four years deserve to know why they are being confined and defend themselves accordingly. Were Americans completely comfortable with locking them away indefinitely, we wouldn’t need to locate them in Cuba or, as was recently revealed, in a network of secret prisons. (Curiously, Republican lawmakers were far more perturbed that this information was revealed than that the “black sites” exist.)

The day before the Senate vote, Tony Blair asked Parliament to approve 90-day detentions of detainees—and was handed his first defeat as prime minister. Perhaps the Brits are more familiar with the Magna Carta.

For his part, President Bush seemed unaffected: he continued on his Asian tour, preaching freedom at each stop.

[CAMPAIGN]

LET THE POSTURING BEGIN

A year after his failed vice-presidential bid, former Sen. John Edwards became the latest Democrat who voted for the Iraq War to issue a *mea culpa*. In a *Washington Post* op-ed he admitted, “I was wrong” and blamed the administration for fooling him with faulty intelli-

gence. “Had I known this at the time,” Edwards wrote, “I never would have voted for this war.”

Perhaps. But many other Democrats were prescient enough to vote against the war. Maybe it’s the politics that changed rather than the information. Edwards, like his running mate John Kerry, cast his pro-war vote knowing that many Democrats took themselves out of their party’s 1992 presidential sweepstakes by voting against the first Persian Gulf War. The Democratic senators who wanted to run for president in 2004 didn’t repeat that mistake. It’s hard to avoid the conclusion that the main thing Edwards knows now that he didn’t know then is that his pro-war vote would actually become a barrier to his presidential ambitions.

[IMMIGRATION]

SANCTUARY FOR KILLERS

Eighteen-year-old Jenny Garcia was stabbed to death at her home in Austin. The police apprehended David Diaz Morales, an illegal alien who was reportedly “infatuated” with the college freshman, and he was charged with murder and burglary.

There is more to this than just another illegal-immigrant crime story. Morales had previously been arrested for the alleged sexual assault of a 12-year-old. He was eligible for immediate deportation. But Austin is a so-called sanctuary city, a jurisdiction that prohibits local law enforcement from co-operating with federal immigration authorities and effectively shields illegal aliens from being deported. More than a dozen cities, including Chicago and Houston, offer such protection. Garcia’s family has filed suit against the city of Austin to challenge this obscene policy. The case should serve as a reminder that the government’s first obligation is to protect innocent Americans from crime, not criminals from our laws. ■

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Scott McConnell

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The American Conservative, Vol. 4, No. 24, December 19, 2005 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries —

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Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery of your first issue and all subscription transactions.

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This issue went to press on November 23, 2005. Copyright 2005 *The American Conservative*.

Who Killed General Motors?

Willys built the jeeps that carried Ike's armies across Europe. Ford built the Sherman tanks. Packard made the engines for JFK's PT boat and for the P-40s of Claire

Chennault's Flying Tigers. Studebaker built the Weasel armored personnel carrier. Chevrolet built the engines for the Flying Boxcar, Buick for the B-24 Liberator, Oldsmobile for the B-25 Mitchell. Colonel "Jimmy" Doolittle flew in his "Thirty-Seconds-Over-Tokyo" raid in 1942.

Nash-Kelvinator built the Navy Corsair and Hudson the Helldiver that succeeded the Dauntless torpedo bomber that sank four Japanese carriers at Midway. But no company matched the contributions to victory of General Motors, the greatest company of them all.

Now most of those companies with the legendary names—Packard, Hudson, Studebaker, Nash, Oldsmobile—are gone. Of the Big Three that survive, Chrysler is German-owned, Ford and GM are bleeding, and their debt has fallen to junk-bond status. Delphi, the auto-parts supplier for GM, just declared bankruptcy.

Thanksgiving week, its share of the U.S. market down from 46 percent 30 years ago to 26 percent today, GM announced the closing of nine more American plants and the dismissal of 30,000 more workers.

Many reasons are given for the decline of the U.S. auto industry. The Volkswagen Beetle that invaded America in the late 1950s, the Toyotas and Hondas that followed, the Korean Kias coming in today, are, we are told, cheaper and more reliable and deliver better mileage. But there is a more basic reason for America's industrial decline.

A sea change has taken place in the

mindset of our elites. The economic patriotism of Hamilton and Clay, Lincoln and TR, and, yes, of the Robber Barons of the Gilded Age who forged America into the mightiest industrial machine the world had ever seen, is dead.

To the economic patriots of the Old Republic, trade policy was designed to benefit the American worker first. They wanted American families to have the highest standard of living on earth and U.S. industry to be superior to that of any and all nations. If this meant favoring American manufacturers with privileged access to U.S. markets and keeping foreign goods out with high tariffs, so be it.

But that Hamiltonian America First vision that guided us for 150 years no longer informs our politics. Economic patriotism is dead.

For the Davos generation of leaders puts the Global Economy first. They are all good internationalists. If it's good for the Global Economy, it must be good for America. Theirs is a quasi-religious faith in that same free-trade ideology for which Hamilton, Clay, Lincoln, and TR had only spitting contempt.

And like Marxists who refuse to question their dogmas despite manifest signs of failure, our free traders believe that everything that is happening to America has to be happening for the best.

That U.S. manufacturing that once employed a third of our labor force now employs perhaps 10 percent does not matter. That the most self-sufficient nation in history that produced 96 percent of all that it consumed now

depends on foreigners for a fourth of its steel, half its autos and machine tools, two-thirds of its textiles and apparel, most of its cameras, bicycles, motorcycles, shoes, TVs, videotape machines, radios, etc., does not matter.

That tens of thousands of foreign workers are brought in each year by U.S. employers to take high-tech jobs, that U.S. factories are shut down daily here while opening in China, that professional work is being outsourced to India, that we borrow \$2 billion a day to finance consumption of foreign goods—none of this matters. The nation does not matter. The country does not matter. For we are all now in a Global Economy.

And so, as the jobs and skills of U.S. manufacturing workers disappear and the taxes they pay into Social Security, Medicare, and federal and state governments fall, and the cost of their pensions is passed on to taxpayers, and the government goes deeper into debt to cover rising social costs corporations used to carry, other countries quietly observe.

Fifty years ago, a trade deficit of 6 percent of GDP, a hemorrhaging of manufacturing jobs, a growing dependence on foreign nations for the vital necessities of our national life, would have been taken as signs of the decline and fall of a great nation.

Our elites tell us that we have simply not read Thomas Friedman, we do not understand that the old Hobbesian world is history, that we have entered a new era of interdependence where democracy and free markets will flourish and usher us all into a golden age—and we Americans will lead the way.

If they are right, we are Cassandras. If they are wrong, they are fools who sold out the greatest country in all history for a mess of pottage. ■

[diversity is strength?]

End of the Rainbow

South Central Los Angeles ushers in a new era of racial tension—this time between blacks and Hispanics.

By Roger D. McGrath

JESSE JACKSON'S Rainbow Coalition has a ways to go in Los Angeles, where Mexicans and blacks are killing each other at record rates. The action is particularly hot in South Central Los Angeles and in nearby Compton, two areas that have undergone a dramatic shift during the last two decades from virtually all black to half or more Hispanic.

Most of the schools in these areas are now majority Latino, something I could not possibly have imagined when I was in high school in the early 1960s. By that time South Central and Compton had made a transition from virtually all white during the 1930s to virtually all black. They remained that way into the late 1970s, when the effects of illegal immigration from Mexico first began to be felt. By the 1990s, entire neighborhoods had been transformed. Terry Anderson, a black auto mechanic from South Central, describes what it was like at the end of the decade:

Today, teenagers can't get after-school or entry-level jobs—something to put on a resume. When I was 16 and 17, I had jobs at McDonald's, Burger King, Jack in the Box. Now these jobs in L.A. are held by 30- or 40-year-old immigrants—100% Spanish-speaking and probably 90% from Mexico.

We have schools here that used to be 80% to 90% black and now, after a period of 10 years, are 80% to 90% Latino. As this trend spreads, blacks either can move to other neighborhoods or watch their children stuck in schools listening to Spanish all day. Yet nobody speaks up for our children the way pro-immigrant organizations do for immigrant children. As a result, our children are getting the equivalent of half a day of school. Why should our children be deprived?

My two-bedroom house near the Coliseum is worth about \$100,000. A comparable house two doors away sold for \$135,000 and the buyers put five immigrant families in it. A black family can't pay that and can't live like that. In the American culture, we have one family to a house. Each of my immigrant neighbors has seven or eight children, while we Americans have two or three. Before long, all these children are going to need a place of their own. Does a black homeowner have to put four families in the house and a fifth in the garage in order to survive? A for-sale sign in our neighborhood causes panic. We know who will get that house.

There will be 20 to 30 people living in it, they will keep goats, they will grow corn in the front yard, they will hang their wash on the front fence. It's a culture clash.

Since the 1990s, the changes described by Anderson have intensified. The demographic statistics are startling. The two high schools nearest the Los Angeles Coliseum—presumably the schools Anderson's children would have attended—are Jefferson, two miles to the east, and Manual Arts, a half mile to the southwest. During the 1960s and '70s, the schools were nearly 100 percent black—and Jefferson had been since the 1940s. Today Jefferson is 7 percent black and 92 percent Hispanic, and Manual Arts 20 percent black and 79.5 percent Hispanic.

The story is similar for the rest of South Central. Fremont High School, virtually 100 percent black during the 1960s and '70s, is now 12 percent black and 88 percent Hispanic. Crenshaw and Locke, two high schools built after the Watts riots and nearly all black during their first 20 years, are now 32 percent and 63 percent Hispanic. Dorsey and Washington high schools, which went from white to black during the '50s and early '60s, are each now 45 percent Hispanic. Unchecked illegal

immigration will ensure Hispanic majorities at the two schools within a few years.

The most stunning change of all, though, has occurred at Jordan High School. Lying six miles to the southeast of the Coliseum, Jordan is in the heart of Watts, a portion of Los Angeles that had the unique distinction of becoming predominately black prior to World War II. During the war, the federal government built Jordan Downs, Nickerson Gardens, and Imperial Courts, three housing projects for southern blacks who had come to Los Angeles to replace

20 percent black and 79 percent Hispanic, and Spanish is the language most commonly heard on campus.

Such dramatic shifts have not come without violence. Fighting is common and racial brawls not unusual. Jefferson High School was the scene of three such brawls during the spring semester alone. Like Jordan, Jefferson High was predominately—almost exclusively—black from the early 1940s until the 1980s. Today, there are only 300 blacks and more than 3,500 Hispanics at the school. Of the Hispanics, 1,741 are listed as “English learners.” Better than half of

reporter and glancing nervously at nearby Latino students. “I’ve got to look over my shoulder every five minutes to see if somebody’s about to whup me.” Another black girl was escorted to her class by a teacher. When asked by other students what happened, she replied, “I was jumped by a bunch of f-----g Mexicans.” While some Latinas tried to console her, several others confronted her and one asked, “Why are you disrespecting me?” The teacher and Scott’s Latina friends managed to get the other girls to back off but not before they taunted their fellow Latinas for having “no pride in your own people.”

Writing for the May-June issue of *LA Youth*, a newspaper that includes a staff of some 70 high-school students, an anonymous Latino student described his participation in the Jefferson High brawl. His version of events suggests that the fight was planned and that both black and brown students knew it was coming on April 14. The anonymous writer said that he had told a black student he knew that he was not going to get involved. “But on the day of the fight,” he said, “when another friend called me and said I needed to back up my Mexican friends, I just wanted to defend my pride. I know that was a stupid reason to miss a day of school. But I wanted to stand up for my family, my Mexican ancestors, and the people who worked hard so I could be here—my heritage that I’m really proud of. ... During the fight I felt good defending my race. I was hitting anybody I could get my hands on.”

Another brawl, this time involving more than 200 students, erupted four days later at Jefferson. Again, it took security guards and cops to quell the disturbance. On April 29, it was Jordan High’s turn when about 100 black and brown students fought. Rumors then had it that any black going to school on May 5—Cinco de Mayo—would be beaten to a pulp. The Los Angeles Unified School

RUMORS HAD IT THAT **ANY BLACK GOING TO SCHOOL ON MAY 5—CINCO DE MAYO—WOULD BE BEATEN TO A PULP.**

white workers then serving overseas. When other high schools in South Central were still white in the 1940s, Jordan was solidly black. Jordan High School and black were synonymous. Watts and black were synonymous.

Crossing into Watts, as I did in 1962 to play a football game against the Jordan High Bulldogs, was like being transported to another country. Except for cops and firemen, whites were nowhere to be seen—and that was at a time when the population of Los Angeles County was 80 percent white. When our team bus stopped at lights, men and boys, loitering at the street corners, gesticulated at us and shouted epithets. We didn’t exactly feel welcomed. After we won 20-7, a security force had to escort us to our bus behind chain-link fences and gates to protect us from a mob that had gathered in the street next to the school’s parking lot.

Jordan remained virtually all black throughout the ’60s and ’70s, and I would have bet that Watts and Jordan High would have remained so for my lifetime and more. Today, the school is

the school’s students were born in Mexico, and nearly all Latino students, whether native or foreign born, converse with each other in Spanish. Blacks have complained about it, saying the “Mexicans” are “disrespecting” them by speaking in Spanish. Latinos have responded by saying they are not going to stop speaking Spanish just because blacks don’t like it.

A brawl involving more than a hundred students erupted on April 14. During lunch, two black girls began fighting over a cell phone. A crowd surrounded them immediately, jeering and heckling. A group of black football players pushed through the crowd to see the action. A milk carton arced through the air and hit one of them. “Who threw the carton?” the victim yelled at some Latinos. “Go back to Africa,” came the response.

Fighting erupted, spread quickly, and continued for 20 minutes before campus security guards and LAPD officers restored order. Blacks got the worst of it, and it seems they regularly do. “I’m scared even to go to class,” said Keiana Scott, speaking to a *Los Angeles Times*

District reported that 51,000 students were absent from its middle and high schools that day, an absentee rate of 20 percent. On May 26, another brawl erupted at Jefferson only 24 hours before a scheduled "Day of Dialogue" to discuss the earlier racial brawls. On the Day of Dialogue all but a few of the school's 300 black students stayed home.

School authorities made all their usual inane comments. Jefferson High principal Norm Morrow claimed he had no idea racial tensions were running so high. "This thing happened so quickly," he said, "it caught us off guard. Had we seen signs of intolerance ... damn right I would have done some things differently." A campus security guard said, "It's a handful of knuckleheads causing the problem." The cures suggested were also standard: troublemakers would be transferred, new security cameras installed, more campus police assigned to the school, the lunch period divided, and community meetings held regularly. Other actions were taken by local residents themselves. Determined to protect their black brothers, members of the Nation of Islam patrolled the streets around the school.

Other racial brawls have occurred at Washington and Locke high schools and individual fights between blacks and browns at every high school in South Central. Although dozens of students have been injured in the brawls, no one has been killed. Yet.

Out on the streets the violence between blacks and browns has turned deadly. During the '70s and '80s, black gangs—essentially the many versions of the Bloods and Crips—ruled the streets in South Central. During the '90s they began to be challenged by Hispanic gangs, mainly Mexicans but some Salvadorans as well. Police tell me that the black gangs are now on the defensive, having had many of their members killed in Blood-Crip warfare and many others imprisoned.

Meanwhile, Latino gangs have a seemingly inexhaustible supply of recruits south of the border. Mexico has 105 million people, and 42 million of them live below the poverty line. Crime and corruption are rampant. Mexican nationals can kill in California and then slip into Mexico. Even if apprehended, which is the rarest of scenarios, they cannot be extradited to the United States for trial. The Mexican constitution prohibits the extradition of any citizen facing a sentence of death or life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. More than a hundred Mexican nationals are wanted for murder in Los Angeles County. Gang members wanted for a whole host of crimes often flee to Mexico for a year or two only to return with a new identity, allowing them to resume their criminal activities.

During the last five years, more than 3,000 murders in Los Angeles County have been attributed to gangs. Fifteen or 20 years ago the majority of the murders would have been committed by members of black gangs. Today, most of the murders are committed by Latino gang members, many of them illegal aliens. Latino gangs now outnumber black gangs, 209 to 152, and have more than

The conflict between Latino gangs and black gangs is especially pronounced at the housing projects in Watts. At Jordan Downs alone, there have been 14 murders since 2000 and an average of a violent crime every day and a half, the highest rate of crime of any public housing project in Los Angeles. In an effort to stop the flow of blood, the LAPD has plans to install surveillance cameras throughout the 700-unit complex. The project's 2,400 residents are not thrilled with the idea. "I wouldn't want the LAPD to watch me day to day," offered resident David Valencia. "Mexicans and blacks don't usually agree on anything. But none of us want to be watched." "This isn't about Big Brother," said Police Commission Vice President Alan Skobin. Added the LAPD's George Gascon, "Cameras are as much a part of policing now as handcuffs."

When black and brown criminals are incarcerated, they take their racial conflict with them into California's prisons. Racial riots occur with disturbing frequency. Blacks and Latinos have been routinely segregated, although a recent court decision may force integration. The results are bound to cause more violent eruptions if reception centers at

THE 18TH STREET GANG IS THE **BLOODIEST CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION** IN LOS ANGELES. **NEARLY TWO-THIRDS** OF ITS MEMBERS ARE **ILLEGAL ALIENS**.

double the number of gang members. The 18th Street gang has more than 10,000 members and is the bloodiest criminal organization in Los Angeles. Police estimate that nearly two-thirds of its members are illegal aliens from south of the border. The Lil' Cycos gang has a similar composition and, although smaller in numbers, proportionately commits as many murders. Year by year, these Latino gangs and others are taking control of turf once ruled by black gangs.

the prisons are any example. The centers serve as temporary homes for processing inmates from county jails before they are assigned to a regular housing unit in the prison. Regardless of race, inmates live together at the centers. Fights are common. In late September, eight inmates were seriously injured in a racial brawl at the reception center at the California Institution for Men at Chino. According to a prison spokesman, more than 200 blacks and

Latinos not only fought but tore up the center “pretty good, with broken windows and doors.”

More ominous, perhaps, is the daily conflict among the general black and brown populations in South Central. Occasionally, the conflict turns deadly. On a Sunday night in late September, 23-year-old William Armistead and 17-year-old Courtney Whaley walked into Robidio Espana’s Super Discount Store on San Pedro Street, a short distance from Fremont High. While in the store, Armistead and Whaley grew irritated at employees speaking to each other in Spanish and assumed themselves to be the objects of derogatory remarks. In response, the two young blacks began harassing a female clerk, gesturing and making offensive sexual remarks. Espana intervened, precipitating a heated verbal exchange with Armistead and Whaley. They left but on their way out the door threatened to return and get Espana.

When they did return to the store, Espana was waiting for them with a gun. He opened fire with deadly accuracy. Hit several times, Armistead dropped to the floor. Rounds also tore into Whaley, but he managed to stagger to the street.

DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES, COMPTON HAS GONE FROM PREDOMINATELY BLACK TO NEARLY 60 PERCENT HISPANIC.

Both men were rushed to a nearby hospital where they died. In the meantime, Espana fled the scene. His family later persuaded him to surrender to police, who charged him with two counts of murder and with being a felon in possession of a handgun. (He had once been convicted of grand theft auto.)

Espana’s wife Lorena said that black gangs had come to the store several times demanding protection money. Her husband had steadfastly refused to pay but was left fearing for his life. Police

confirmed that is what she told them but could not corroborate the claim. Ironically, police said that Latino gangs had been extorting money from businesses in the area. Only a year ago, the city had filed an injunction against the Latino 38th Street gang for its extortion racket.

Within days of the shooting, “187 Mexicans” appeared on the front wall of Espana’s store—187 referring to the section in California’s criminal code for murder. The concise graffiti soon began appearing elsewhere in South Central. Also within days of the shooting, a black woman, who was friends with the Whaleys, was shot by what witnesses described as “Mexicans” while she stood in front of the Whaley home. She is expected to recover.

California’s Victim Assistance Program provided money for Courtney Whaley’s burial but not for that of William Armistead, who was on probation when he died. (State regulations prohibit funds from the victim program going to anyone on probation.) Lorena Espana was less than sympathetic. “The families of the two people who died know well what happened. They don’t want to recognize that they were to blame.”

Meanwhile, in the incorporated city of Compton, just over the line from South Central Los Angeles, several blacks were killed in October in what may have been racially motivated shootings, bringing the city’s total murders thus far in the year to 54. With only 93,000 people, Compton has become one of the murder capitals of the United States. During the last two decades, the town has gone from predominately black to nearly 60 percent Hispanic. Compton’s two high schools, Centennial

and Compton—more than 90 percent black in the ’60s and ’70s—are now 54 percent and 66 percent Hispanic. At Centennial, 41 percent of the students are English learners, and at Compton 50 percent, meaning that 80-90 percent of the Latino students at each school fall into the category. They speak Spanish with each other and have little to do with black students.

Despite a majority of Latino students, six of the eight members of school board are black. More striking, though, is the exclusively black city government, including the mayor, the city attorney, the city treasurer, the city clerk, and all members of the city council. Four of five city jobs are held by blacks. Thus far, Latino demands for jobs and a role in government have gone nowhere, principally because most of Compton’s Latinos are illegal aliens and don’t vote.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, whose deputies patrol Compton, attributes the spike in murders to drugs, gangs, and racial tension. Drugs and gangs, however, were very much a part of Compton during the ’70s, ’80s, and ’90s, leaving racial conflict between blacks and Latinos as the new factor—the elephant in the living room that few want to discuss publicly. Baca was right about drugs and gangs, though, except instead of black gang members killing each other as in the past in Compton, it is now more likely black-on-brown or brown-on-black.

There is a war at the moment between the Latino Compton Tortilla Flats gang and the black Fruit Town Pirus. Their combined efforts just might make this a record year for murder in Compton.

It’s clear that the Rainbow Coalition’s colors are running, and they’re running blood red. ■

Roger D. McGrath is an historian in California and the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen and Vigilantes.

French Lessons

The nation that neocons most despise has followed their immigration prescription.

By Steve Sailer

AMERICAN PUNDITS have been crowing about how much better America is at handling minorities and immigrants than is France, which got what it had coming during the weeks of car-burning riots.

As in France, where the political class seemed more interested in the riots' impact on the 2007 presidential election than in stopping the destruction, few talking heads here were inclined to blame the rioting on the rioters. After all, the columnists feel, the North and West Africans setting cars on fire are just a bunch of lowbrow punks, hardly worthy of our disdain, and it's much more fun to score points off ideological rivals.

Liberal gloating has at least been more attached to reality than that of the neoconservatives, since the liberals recognize that the French state shares with their neocon antagonists an ideological opposition to affirmative action and identity politics. The French government doesn't even compile statistics by race or ethnicity, for example.

Four *Washington Post* columnists announced that the French riots showed the advantages of American-style racial quotas. The notion that the black riots of the late 1960s did us all a favor was popular. Detroit native Keith Richburg asserted, "The ashes of the riots in my hometown—the loss of life, the destruction of many businesses—eventually gave rise to something better." That's a curious claim since Detroit now has fewer than half the jobs it had before the 1967 riot. Indeed, in November the Sacramento Kings caused a political furor by welcoming the visiting Detroit Pistons by

showing a montage of the Motor City's urban wasteland. Apparently, 38 years of post-riot betterment later, displaying video of Detroit on the Jumbotron is considered an anti-black slur.

David Ignatius opined, "The United States began to find solutions for its tormenting 'original sin' after its cities burned in the 1960s." Perhaps Ignatius spent last Labor Day weekend spelunking in a cave. We're all supposed to forget what we saw with our lying eyes on television from New Orleans, but we haven't witnessed much evidence of racial "solutions" or even that the black underclass has turned its back on looting. How about that riot in Toledo on Oct. 15? Or the riots in Cincinnati and Seattle in 2001?

If there's anything we know about rioting in modern America, it's that unrest is more common during eras of rising expectations or declining law enforcement. The black riots of the second half of the 1960s followed the triumphs of the civil-rights movement. The Watts riot, for instance, started five days after LBJ signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Indeed, African-Americans already held 20 percent of the seats on the Los Angeles city council, more than their share of the city's population.

The 1992 L.A. riot got out of control at the intersection of Florence and Normandie because of a *de facto* strike by the Los Angeles Police Department. Tired of being denounced for brutality ever since the Rodney King run-in, they pulled back and let the public see who the real bad guys were.

So why have black riots been less lethal in this decade than in the 1990s or 1960s? Nobody really knows, but one massive change is the staggering increase in imprisonment. Of the two million incarcerated today, one million are black, and tens of thousands of the most dangerous criminals shot each other during the crack wars in the early 1990s. Mostly due to high rates of imprisonment and murder, there are now 36 percent more black women than black men alive in NYC, which explains much about why crime has fallen. That may be the most important difference between the U.S. and Europe in terms of race relations, but it's not one that many have mentioned in the press.

Post op-edster Eugene Robinson proclaimed: "The riots in the suburbs of Paris and other French cities ought to wipe the smirk from the lips of even multiculturalism's smuggest critics." Unfortunately for Robinson, the persuasiveness of his argument was undermined by a news report from the officially multiculturalist Netherlands that appeared in the *Post* the same day: "For Public Figures in Netherlands, Terror Becomes a Personal Concern." This story pointed out "a soaring number of Dutch academics, lawmakers and other public figures who have been forced to accept 24-hour protection or go into hiding after receiving death threats from Islamic extremists." The ParaPundit blog observed, "This is nature's way of telling you Muslim immigration is bad."

Similarly, multiculturalist Britain suffered a black versus South Asian race riot

in the Lozells district of Birmingham in October. There were major Pakistani riots in several northern English cities in 2001, and Muslim terrorist bombings in London last July killed 52 and injured 700.

Also weighing in on the *Post's* op-ed page, Anne Applebaum complained that when she was in France in 2002, she couldn't find "a single black or North African face on any of the post-election

personality and philosophy. The French are quarrelsome, vengeful, ideological, and verbally facile—a nation of Podhoretzes. Although the neocons contend that America is a "Proposition Nation," where membership in the national community should be based merely on assent to ideological precepts, rather than on blood, birth, or "mystic chords of memory," the French, with their love

to the urban North and West shifted into high gear with the mechanization of cotton harvesting during World War II. The generation of black migrants who arrived in the big cities after World War II were relatively deferential to authority, as immigrants tend to be, but their children grew up on the streets and had a much more resentful attitude toward being low men on the urban totem pole. The youth began rioting and mugging in large numbers during the 1960s.

Also, many of the more recent American riots have been sparked by African-American anger at economic competition from immigrants. For example, the 1992 L.A. riot was, in sizable measure, a black pogrom against Korean shopkeepers, such as the one who shot a teenage black girl in the back in an incident that may have caused as much anger among L.A. blacks as the more widely publicized Rodney King affair. Similarly, in the 1980s, there were three black riots in Miami against the Latino power structure.

Many Americans are congratulating themselves for their brilliance in choosing to locate the U.S. north of a huge supply of unskilled Latin Americans rather than north of a huge supply of unskilled Muslims, like those idiot Europeans did. Indeed, the French pioneered the Bush administration's invade-the-world-invite-the-world policies during the Algerian War of 1954-1962. With a half-million Frenchmen fighting in Algeria, France increased its intake of Algerian laborers.

Please remember, though, that when the Europeans started inviting in Muslim guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s, it seemed like a good idea. Back then, Muslims appeared to be a submissive bunch. G.K. Chesterton and his friend Hilaire Belloc had forecast before World War II that Islam would challenge Christendom once again, but during the second half of the last century, Islam, even in its own

THE FRENCH ARE QUARRELSOME, VENGEFUL, IDEOLOGICAL, AND VERBALLY FACILE—A NATION OF PODHORETZES.

talk shows. That doesn't excuse the violence, but it does help explain it." In reality, does the sight of successful co-ethnics discourage race rioting? When L.A. was torched in 1992, the city had had a black mayor for the previous 19 years and was home to more black celebrities than anywhere else on earth.

While the liberals' awareness of American history has been faulty, the neoconservatives have been downright incoherent with *schadenfreude*. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, Max Boot offered this unlikely assertion: "France, like most European nations, defines itself in ethnic, cultural and religious terms that can leave non-Caucasian and non-Christian outsiders feeling excluded, however long they have lived there. Foreigners find it much harder to become 'French' or 'German' than 'American.'"

That's a travesty of the difference between the French Republic, which offers birthright citizenship (*jus soli*) to the children of immigrants, and Germany, which has traditionally offered citizenship to all Germans by blood (*jus sanguinis*), even if their ancestors had lived near the Volga River in Russia for ten generations, but not to Turks born in Germany.

The embarrassing truth is that the country the neocons most hate, France, is the one most similar to them in

of theory and abstraction, have always been more enthusiastic than Americans about that conception of nationhood. Indeed, the French state has traditionally treated immigrants and minorities as the neocons have long advised: France has had sizable levels of immigration, unilingualism, meritocracy, education in civics theories, birthright citizenship, and separation of church and state.

The *Wall Street Journal* used the French riots to advocate (surprise!) cutting wages. L.A.-based urban expert Joel Kotkin praised America's countless ill-paid jobs in an essay entitled "Why Immigrants Don't Riot Here." He must not recall the 1992 riot in his hometown, in which at least 53 people died. Blacks started the riot, but Latinos, especially recent Central American immigrants (many of them illegal), opportunistically took up looting. Ultimately, Hispanics comprised 51 percent of the approximately 10,000 arrestees. Nor must he remember that in May 1991, Hispanics initiated two nights of rioting in the Mt. Pleasant district of Washington D.C., after an African-American female police officer shot a drunken Salvadoran man who was attacking her with a knife.

Moreover, the black riots of 1965-68 were the work of internal immigrants. The Great Migration from the rural South

lands, appeared to be a spent force compared to exciting modern trends like nationalism, socialism, Pan-Arabism, Nasserism, and Ba'athism. The enormous wave of Muslim resentment that has been such a driving force of history over the last 30 years was simply unanticipated by Europeans.

Are we going to look back on inviting in tens of millions of Latin Americans with the same regret? I don't know, but shouldn't we pause now and then to think about it?

Right now, there's a wind from the south, a mighty storm of anti-white populism blowing up from South American countries like Venezuela and Bolivia. It will likely have a sizable influence on Mexico's 2006 presidential election and might then spread from Mexico to the U.S.

Now, I don't dispute Kotkin's point that France should loosen up its labor laws so more jobs can be created. But let's be clear: most of those would be crud jobs, not the kind of jobs gangsta rap-loving hip-hop hoodlums from the slums of France would like. *Der Spiegel* quoted one young French-born Muslim: "Why are we angry? ... Because my father was brought here 30 years ago to do the work that the French didn't want to do."

Their immigrant parents accepted these jobs "the French didn't want to do," yet their born-in-France kids want cool office jobs with big expense accounts. Unfortunately, many of the Muslims lack the needed skills, so they aren't going to be happy even if the French adopt the *WSJ's* economic recommendations.

The harsh fact that most of the pundits don't want to think about is this: what matters most in determining whether immigration is successful is not the details of how the immigrants are treated by the host society after they arrive but the quantity and quality of the immigrants themselves.

Contradictorily, Kotkin holds up the U.S. as a model of free-market vibrancy, while the *Washington Post* liberals praise the pervasive racial quotas the federal government has imposed on our corporations. Despite all that, a huge fraction of young black males aren't bothering to hold jobs. Charles Murray recently wrote:

Among black males ages 20-24, for example, the percentage who were not working or looking for work when the first numbers were gathered in 1954 was 9 percent. That figure grew during the 1960s and 1970s, stabilizing at around 20 percent during the 1980s. The proportion rose again, reaching 30 percent in 1999, a year when employers were frantically seeking workers for every level of job.

That's not counting the roughly 10 percent of young black males who are incarcerated. Some of that black male departure from the work force was precipitated by illegal immigration driving

down wages for crummy jobs. Yet much of it represents a cultural change among blacks, who decided they weren't going to take servile jobs anymore. Let the Mexicans have them!

These days, America's white elites assume that Latinos are born to serve them, just like their grandparents assumed up through the early 1960s that the docile Aunt Jemimas and Uncle Bens they employed were born to cook for them. Today, very few whites have African-American servants anymore. Why, then, do we assume that the vast next generation of Hispanics, like the African-Americans and African-French today, won't decide they are sick of doing the jobs whites didn't want to do?

Unfortunately, few in the press will dare talk about this crucial question because it pays better to kick the French around that to speak honestly about the future of America. ■

Steve Sailer, TAC's film critic, also writes for VDARE.com and iSteve.com.

Innocent Abroad

Karen Hughes's mission impossible

By Leon Hadar

A FEW YEARS AGO, I participated in a workshop taught by a well-known marketing guru who guaranteed in a brochure that after a few sessions with him "you'll be even able to sell ice to Eskimos, sand to Bedouins, and condoms to eunuchs." I suppose that if an updated brochure were issued in late 2005, in the fifth year of the presidency of George W. Bush and at a time when according to the Pew Research Center "anti-Americanism is deeper and broader now than at any time in

modern history," the celebrated PR whiz-kid would add to his marketing mission-impossible list the selling of a very unappealing product—the Bush administration's foreign policy, AKA Democratic Empire—to an unreceptive global target audience that includes Eskimos ("Let's make the North Pole safe for democracy"), Bedouins ("From the guys who brought you Lawrence of Arabia: won't you buy a used camel from Bush?"), and perhaps even a few eunuchs.

Enter Karen Hughes, our new global PR czarina, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy. After reading the press coverage of her tragicomic odyssey among the believers in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, and Malaysia—perhaps best described as “My Travels with Texas Karen the Infidel in the Lands of Ishmael”—one can assume that the only way the geniuses at Foggy Bottom could have turned that trip into more of a disaster for the American brand name would have been to choose Ray Stevens’s 1962 hit, “Ahab the Arab” as Madame Ambassador Hughes’s theme song for her Mideast excursion, which was billed as a “listening tour.” “Let me tell you about Ahab the Arab, the sheik of the burning sand. ... He wore a big ol’ turban wrapped around his head. ... he’d jump on his camel named Clyde, and ride”

Even without Ahab the Arab and Clyde the Camel to accompany her, the voyages of America’s top public diplomat to the Middle East and Southeast Asia turned into major media fiascos that will probably be taught one day in

Turkish women—hand-picked by a supposedly “pro-American” outfit—who questioned the credibility of American commitment to democracy and women’s rights while the U.S. was occupying Iraq and backing the Kurds. (Not unlike their male compatriots, Turkish women don’t like Kurds.) And then there was that blunder in Jakarta, Indonesia, where the president’s old political confidante, following in the footsteps of George “Yellowcake” Bush, Dick “Last Throes” Cheney, Condoleezza “Mushroom Cloud” Rice, and George “Slam Dunk” Tenet, umm ... mis-spoke, stating twice that Saddam Hussein gassed to death “hundreds of thousands” of his people. (About 5,000 Iraqis are believed to have been gassed by Saddam at a time when he was receiving aid from Washington in his war against Iran. Never mind...)

Some critics have proposed that Hughes was chosen for a job for which she isn’t qualified because she is a political crony of Bush. “W. thinks so highly of Ms. Hughes, his longtime Texas political nanny, spinner, speechwriter and

was trying very, very hard: blowing kisses to small groups of “fans” in the streets of Cairo selected in advance by the Egyptian Mukhbarrat; giving the high-five to bewildered cute little Turkish kids and telling them how Uncle George in Washington really, really loves them; attempting to bond (“I’m a working mom”) with Turkish housewives; all the while assuring the Muslims that her boss is a Man of God and projecting that all-American persona of a cheerleader from the University of Houston who was on a mission to recruit veiled Muslim girls for the winning U.S. team.

But what can you really do to help improve America’s battered image in the most populous Muslim nation on earth when your three-day tour of Indonesia comes just as television images are showing U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan burning the corpses of Taliban fighters? “Your policies are creating hostilities among Muslims,” Indonesian student Lailatul Qadar told Hughes after her fiery, and inaccurate, Saddam-is-Hitler address. “It’s Bush in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and maybe it’s going to be in Indonesia, I don’t know. Who’s the terrorist? Bush or us Muslims?”

Indeed, as the famed marketing guru made clear in his workshop, “You can’t sell a soap that doesn’t wash.” Or to apply that overused cliché, “It’s the policy, stupid.” Sworn in early in September, Hughes became the latest top official charged with repairing a U.S. image abroad soured by the war in Iraq and complaints in Europe and the Middle East over Bush’s policies and leadership. In fact, she is the third person that President Bush has appointed to this position since 9/11—more proof that what the White House needs is not another Madison Avenue PR executive or K Street spinmeister. Hughes’s predecessors—Charlotte Beers, a successful advertising hand

HUGHES PLEDGED TO A **GROUP OF SAUDI WOMEN** THAT “I HAVE A DREAM” THAT **ONE DAY THEY WOULD DRIVE CARS**. THEY RESPONDED WITH “FRANKLY MY DEAR, WE DON’T GIVE A DAMN,” AND BY THE WAY, **WHAT ABOUT THE ISRAELI REPRESSION OF THE PALESTINIANS?**

how-not-to-sell-your-product marketing classes or at least recalled as another of those what-were-they-thinking Washington mysteries.

Hughes pledged to a group of Saudi women that “I have a dream” that one day they would drive cars. They responded with “frankly my dear, we don’t give a damn,” and by the way, what about the Israeli repression of the Palestinians? She met with an audience of

ghostwriter, that he put his Lima Green Bean, as he called her when she prodded him about the environment, in charge of the critical effort to salvage America’s horrendous image in the Islamic world—even though what she knows about Islam could fit in a lima green bean,” suggested *New York Times* columnist and Bush critic Maureen Dowd. But you’ve got to give this tough lady from Texas some credit. She

who helped produce a pathetic propaganda film targeted at Muslim audiences, and Margaret Tutwiler, Secretary of State James Baker's impressive spokeswoman, were driven out of office not because they couldn't get a handle on the mechanisms of public diplomacy as a way of fostering goodwill toward the United States and its culture and values. "The problem here is not American popular culture—beloved and emulated everywhere—or even American political culture, imbued with the richest ideas about freedom, democracy, and individual rights," wrote Arab columnist Fawaz Turki about Hughes's tour of the Middle East. "The problem rather is American foreign policy, that remains, where it is not bellicose, overtly and unabashedly moralistic in tone," he stressed, adding, "Let the record show that no one has identified the gushy Hughes as an 'ugly American,' just an inane one." To put it differently, the fault, dear President Bush, does not lie in the American people or even in our "public diplomacy" and its managers, but in your disastrous Middle East diplomacy. "What the United States should be doing is changing policy, not dressing it up to look better," is the way Cairo's *Al-Ahram* put it.

But President Bush had already concluded long ago that they hate us in the Middle East and in other parts of the world because of "who we are"—and not because of what we do. Forget about the bloody occupation of Iraq, the Jewish settlers in the West Bank, or the support for the corrupt Arab regimes. And let's not dwell on Fallujah, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, or Intifada II. It's all the fault of Al Jazeera that keeps showing those "anti-American" images. Let's just have a good spinning *a la* Karl Rove to counter those images with great "pro-American" newsbites, visuals, and catchy slogans. Hey, we could even try

to plant an enterprising journalist searching for the truth, Judith Miller-style, at Al Jazeera.

This is an approach that has been advanced on a global scale by a White House that acted as though the war in Iraq were "a public relations problem first and a military problem second," as *Time* columnist Joe Klein put it. It assumes that if the administration was so successful in convincing Joe Blow in

Israel/Palestine, and elsewhere only helps fuel more anti-Americanism. This discrepancy between the neocon propaganda and the outcome of Bush's foreign policy is also responsible for the dramatic erosion in domestic public support for U.S. policies in Iraq as more and more Americans, including Joe Blow, seem to be deserting the faith-based community in favor of the reality-based one.

ALL YOU NEED IS A **CONSISTENT MESSAGE** THAT YOU REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES A DAY **LIKE A PARROT ON CRACK: DEMOCRACY! DEMOCRACY! DEMOCRACY!** EVENTUALLY THOSE GUYS IN THE MIDDLE EAST **WILL COME TO THEIR SENSES.**

Peoria that Saddam was behind 9/11 and was planning to nuke Cincinnati, there is no reason that the administration can't also make Ahab the Arab believe that the Bushies want to bring freedom to the Middle East and peace to the Holy Land. All you need is not to deviate from a consistent message that you repeat several times a day like a parrot on crack: Democracy! Democracy! Democracy! Eventually those guys in the Middle East will come to their senses and figure out that American intentions are good and that the country's commitment to spreading democracy is not merely a hypocritical justification for getting rid of regimes that President Bush and *The Weekly Standard* dislike.

There are no signs that President Bush's public diplomacy is helping win the hearts and minds of either the elites or the publics in the Middle East—or for that matter in most parts of the world, including among traditional American allies in Canada and Western Europe. If anything, the discrepancy between the bombastic and misleading American message and the reality of U.S. policies on the ground in Iraq,

Ironically, that was the process that led eventually to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist movement, which had been led for several decades by very sophisticated and talented propaganda masters who would have made the Hugheses, the Roves, and the Kristols of Washington look like amateurs. Like the current neocon crew that drives American foreign policy, the Communist spinmeisters were confident that all that was necessary to maintain international and domestic support was to perfect the medium and massage the message. At the same time, American public diplomacy during the Cold War was much less ambitious and relied mostly on conveying the powerful and attractive reality of America's society, economy, and culture to the world. That was the kind of American brand—innovators that bring you iPods, not eunuchs who build and promote empires—that helped the United States to win the Cold War. ■

Leon Hadar is a Cato Institute research fellow in foreign-policy studies and author of Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East.

Free Vermont

Green Mountain boys ponder secession.

By Bill Kauffman

ORGANIZERS BILLED the Vermont Independence Convention of Oct. 28 as “the first statewide convention on secession in the United States since North Carolina voted to secede from the Union on May 20, 1861.” North Carolina, the final state to join the Confederacy, overcame its unionist scruples with some reluctance; by contrast, the 250 or so Vermonters gathered in Montpelier, that coziest of state capitals, gloried in the prospect of disunion.

Montpelier is the only McDonald’s-less state capital in the land, and from its late October splendor issued a Jeffersonian firebell in the night, ringing a warning to the national capital: the United States deserve a break(up) today.

Only in Vermont, with its town-meeting tradition and tolerance of radical dissent, would the golden-domed State Capitol be given over to a convention exploring the whys and wherefores of splitting from the United States. And all for a rental fee of \$35! (It would have been free if the disunionists had knocked off by 4 p.m.)

* * *

Thomas Naylor, a Mississippi native and longtime professor of economics at Duke, who in best contrarian fashion flew north in retirement to the Green Mountain State, is the founder, theoretician, and chief sticker-of-stamps-on-envelopes for the Second Vermont Republic (SVR), which declares itself “a peaceful, democratic, grassroots, libertarian populist movement committed to the return of Vermont to its status as an

independent republic as it once was between 1777 and 1791.”

The Second Vermont Republic has a clear, if not simple, mission: “Our primary objective is to extricate Vermont peacefully from the United States as soon as possible.” The SVR people are not doing this to “make a point” or to stretch the boundaries of debate. They really want out.

Although SVR members range from hippie greens to gun owners—and among the virtues of Vermont is that the twain do sometimes meet—Naylor describes his group’s ideological coloration as “leftish libertarian with an anarchist streak.”

The SVR lauds the principles and practices of direct democracy, local control of education and health care, small-scale farming, neighborhood enterprise, and the devolution of political power. The movement is anti-globalist and sees beauty in the small. It detests Wal-Mart, the Interstate Highway System, and a foreign policy that is “immoral, illegal, and unconstitutional.” It draws inspiration from, among others, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who in bidding farewell to his neighbors in Cavendish, Vermont, where he had lived in exile for 17 years, praised “the sensible and sure process of grassroots democracy, in which the local population solves most of its problems on its own, not waiting for the decisions of higher authorities.”

Naylor likes to say that Wal-Mart, which is “too big, too powerful, too intrusive, too mean-spirited, too materialistic, too dehumanizing, too undemocratic,

too environmentally insensitive, and too unresponsive to the social, cultural, and economic needs of individual citizens and small communities,” is the American metaphor in these post-republic days. Perhaps it is. So why not a new metaphor, suggests Naylor: that of Vermont, which is “smaller, more rural, more democratic, less violent, less commercial, more egalitarian, and more independent” than its sister states?

When Naylor laid out the case for independence in *The Vermont Manifesto* (2003), the political air was heavy, sodden, statist. “Even in the best of times secession is a very tough sell in the USA,” lamented Naylor in 2002. “Since Sept. 11, it has proven to be an impossible sell.” But George, Scooter, and Wolfie, for whom Vermont is just another inconsequential state full of potential bodybag fillers, came to the rescue, putting a rebarbative face on the Empire and opening the door to radical possibilities.

In stepped the Second Vermont Republic, with a blend of whimsicality and seriousness, and its “eye-catching street theater has proven irresistible to the media, as has its exponential growth in the aftermath of the 2004 elections,” according to Cathy Resmer of the Burlington weekly *Seven Days*.

With polemical wit provided by Vermont’s Bread and Puppet Theater, the SVR has staged mock funeral processions, parades, and Fourth of July floats in which children declared their independence from bedtime, “annoying siblings,” and “my floaties.” The SVR has

even achieved a symbolic political success, persuading the legislature to declare Jan. 16 as Vermont Independence Day in commemoration of the establishment of the First Vermont Republic in 1777.

The group's seriousness of purpose is evident in its literate monthly, *Vermont Commons*, which includes contributions from the likes of Wendell Berry, Bill McKibben, and Kirkpatrick Sale on such topics as family and organic farming, community-supported agriculture, land trusts, and local currencies-constituting in sum, a humane and practicable alternative to the Empire of Wal-Mart and Warfare. The tincture is green, but conservative, too, and although Naylor refuses to kiss up to his state's hack politicians—he calls Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy “a world-class prostitute”—the Republican lieutenant governor has praised the SVR for “their energy and their passion.”

Secessionist whispers have souged through Vermont for years. In 1990, Frank Bryan, the University of Vermont political scientist and populist author of *Real Democracy*, the definitive work on town meeting (see “Democracy in Vermont,” *TAC*, Sept. 13, 2004), stumped the state debating secession, in the affirmative, with Vermont Chief Justice John Dooley. Following each of the seven debates, citizens voted to secede.

The presidency of George W. Bush has made the fanciful seem a little less fantastic. The nascent SVR-inspired Middlebury Institute, directed by Kirkpatrick Sale, author of the classic *Human Scale*, seeks to “put secession on the national agenda.” Audacious, perhaps, but hardly a forlorn hope, for as Naylor asks, “Do you want to go down with the Titanic? No empire has survived the test of time.”

Secession is blowing in the wind. Sale and Naylor count at least 28 U.S. secessionist movements active everywhere

from those dubious Cold War states of Alaska and Hawaii to New York City—site of Norman Mailer's prophetically pro-secession 1969 mayoralty campaign—to the states of the Confederacy, with their League of the South, and up to the felicitously named State of Jefferson in northern California and southern Oregon. America has gone fission.

The Second Vermont Republic confounds those who would analyze it using the language of practical politics. It pursues with humor and a dogged optimism a goal that seems manifestly impossible. It speaks radical notions with a conservative diction. It operates at the political fringe yet attracts such eminent establishmentarians as John Kenneth Galbraith, who communicated his “pleasure in, and approval of the Second Vermont Republic.”

Or consider the case of George Kennan, to whom *The Vermont Manifesto* is dedicated and whom Thomas Naylor calls, without any posthumous exaggeration, “the godfather of the

Kennan's secession letters, dictated from his sickbed, are pointed and poignant. “All power to Vermont in its effort to distinguish itself from the USA as a whole, and to pursue in its own way the cultivation of its own tradition,” he wrote in May 2002.

In his lengthiest discourse on the subject, Kennan wrote Naylor that in the matter of independence for Vermont and her neighbors, “I see nothing fanciful, and nothing towards the realization of which the efforts of enlightened people might not be usefully directed. Such are at present the dominating trends in the U.S. that I can see no other means of ultimate preservation of cultural and societal values that will not only be endangered but eventually destroyed in an endlessly prolonged association of the northern parts of New England with the remainder of what is now the U.S.A.”

Ah, but there is a complication. Kennan was attracted to the Second Vermont Republic partly because he deplored the Hispanicization of the United States.

KENNAN BECAME MUCH TAKEN WITH THE IDEA OF AN INDEPENDENT VERMONT, ALTHOUGH HE TOLD NAYLOR THAT “WE ARE, I FEAR, A LONELY BAND.”

movement.” Kennan—diplomat, memoirist, the only Wise Man of the 1940s worthy of the sobriquet—had speculated about devolving the U.S. into “a dozen constituent republics” in his valediction *Around the Cragged Hill* (1993).

Nearing his centenary—he died March 17, 2005 at the age of 101—Kennan became much taken with the idea of an independent Vermont, although he told Naylor that “we are, I fear, a lonely band; until some of the things we have written are discovered by what we may hope will be a more thoughtful and serious generation of critics and reviewers, I am afraid we will remain that way.”

Instancing Mexican immigration, Kennan saw “unmistakable evidences of a growing differentiation between the cultures, respectively, of large southern and southwestern regions of this country, on the one hand,” and those of “some northern regions,” including Vermont. In the former, “the very culture of the bulk of the population of these regions will tend to be primarily Latin-American in nature rather than what is inherited from earlier American traditions.”

“Could it really be that there was so little of merit” in the American Republic, asked Kennan, “that it deserves to be recklessly trashed in favor of a polyglot mix-mash?”

* * *

It is no small portion of Vermont's charm that the secessionists were given use of the state house in Montpelier, which lent a certain sobriety to what might otherwise have been a rambunctiously motley conference.

Thomas Naylor fretted the night before the convention that the crowd might overwhelm the two-man Capitol security force, but not to worry: the secessionists behaved splendidly, so that the officers had no duties more pressing than giving directions to the

Vermont Republic, Naylor shrugged and replied, "whatever the people decide." The SVR takes no position on abortion, gay rights, gun control, and the like; these are questions to be debated within an independent Vermont. Devolution is the great defuser of explosive issues: let Utah be Utah, let San Francisco be San Francisco, let Vermont be Vermont.

Naylor grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, but he rocked uneasily in Confederacy's cradle. He attended football games and refused to stand for the playing of "Dixie." He was a liberal who

secession. He is, like many decentralists, an American patriot who reveres the crazy old idiosyncratic America and whose heart stirs to patriotic tunes. But something has happened; the country seems to have gotten away from itself. "The reservoirs of citizenship are dried up, and that's why we've got to secede," asserted Bryan. (Lest we forget, Bryan reminded us that in many other countries of the world, "We'd be shot for doing what we're doing here today.")

The keynote speaker was that scourge of suburbia, James Howard Kunstler, upstate New York Democrat and slashingly witty Jeremiah, who predicted that "life and politics are going to become profoundly and intensely local" as the age of cheap oil slips away. Kunstler is a novelist and social critic, not a secessionist, though as one considers his prophecies and their implications—Wal-Mart will topple like a statue of Lenin; food will be grown for local markets; New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the Upper Midwest will endure while Phoenix returns to ashes and Las Vegas loses its shirt—one might be excused for thinking him a utopian.

Kirk Sale, pointing to the state motto, "Freedom and Unity," offered his good-natured anarchist dissent, remarking, "the more unity you have, the less freedom. It is disunity that allows freedom." (I had driven to Montpelier that morning with my hell-raising pal Marty Stucko and Sale, a delightful dinner companion. "Park here! Park here!" Kirk said as we passed spots featuring conspicuous NO PARKING signs. "What are you?" I finally asked, "a f-----g anarchist?!")

After eight hours of small-scale democracy in action, the assembled Vermonters voted to "peacefully and democratically free [themselves] from the United States of America." You may call it a lark, but on this last Friday before Halloween 2005, I thought I saw it grow wings.

DEVOLUTION IS THE GREAT DEFUSER OF EXPLOSIVE ISSUES: LET UTAH BE UTAH, LET SAN FRANCISCO BE SAN FRANCISCO, LET VERMONT BE VERMONT.

restrooms and transmitting the request, "Will the owner of a black Mercedes please move your vehicle?" Days of Rage these were not.

The Rev. Ben T. Matchstick, a radical puppeteer, called the assembly to irreverent order with a benediction invoking "the flounder, the sunfish, and the holy mackerel." Men in business suits, white-maned Vermont earth mothers, and pony-tailed college kids wearing winter skull-caps indoors packed Representatives Hall, sitting at the desks elsetimes occupied by state representatives and filling the room with a sweet fragrance of winsome radicalism and localist patriotism.

Under a portrait of George Washington, Naylor, the founding father of this republic in gestation, charged that the U.S. government has "no moral authority... it has no soul," and he denied the salvific properties of the Democratic Party: "It doesn't matter if Hillary Clinton or Condoleezza Rice is the next president—the results will be equally grim."

Rodomontade was kept to a minimum; the gathered had plenty of "what about?" questions. Asked what would become of abortion rights in a Second

loved the Ole Miss Rebels but never for a second fell for the moonlight and magnolias myth.

When a delegate asked the inevitable Civil War question, I expected to see Naylor's long frame dance around it nimbly. Instead, he met it head on. "South Carolina and the Confederate states had a perfect right to secede," he told the assembly. He recommended Tom DiLorenzo's debunking *The Real Lincoln* and said, "the bottom line of the Civil War was preserving the Empire." I expected audible gasps and fainting Unitarians, but the unsayable, having been said, was not confuted. Would not the Empire treat a seceding Vermont with as little forbearance as Lincoln showed South Carolina in 1861? Naylor scoffed: "Would all of the black and white Holsteins be destroyed or perhaps the entire sugar maple crop be burned?"

Frank Bryan, introduced by Naylor as "hands down the most interesting person in Vermont ... since Solzhenitsyn left the state," confessed to being "sad" and "melancholy" because "my nation needs Vermont to secede." Bryan has long been achingly ambivalent about

* * *

Vermont secession is not an “issue” like entitlement reform or prescription-drug benefits. It is an eidolon, a Vermont-specific image of the American Dream (the real dream, not the imperial nightmare) that may not concretize—what an inapt verb for green Vermont!—for many years but that has the power to fire imaginations, to inspirit those in despair, to keep flying a banner to which patriots can rally. An independent Vermont is not a joke, nor is it an *ignis fatuus*; it is the shape that hope takes in the darkening shadow of a crumbling Empire.

John McClaughry, the Vermonter who heads the free-market Ethan Allen Institute, detects “a virulent anti-American leftism” in the SVR, adding, “whether this goes so far as a willingness to forswear the continued receipt of Social Security checks from the despised U.S. of A. the organizers have yet to say.” Naylor responds that expatriates currently receive their Social Security checks without incident. And to the common argument that Vermont receives \$1.15 for every dollar it sends to Washington and therefore would shortchange itself by separating from the Union, Frank Bryan has replied, “Would you rather have \$10,000 to spend any way you want or \$11,500 that you have to spend as I say?”

McClaughry is a cussed original whose work I have long admired, but unless the defining characteristics of “anti-American leftism” are a loathing of Wal-Mart, the Iraq War, and Big Government and a fondness for organic farming, town meeting, and a Vermont First ethic, the SVR seems to me a whole-somely shaggy band of *ur*-Americans, not anti-Americans.

Yeah, I saw a fistful of nuts at the Montpelier convention. I kept a judicious distance from the man who stood to announce that he had once “stuck a fake knife through [his] head.” There

was a collegiate white Rasta or two and a Montreal pwog who informed us that “the U.S. is based on genocide,” but they were the sort of free-floating crazies who show up wherever two or more people are gathered in the name of revolution. In the main, in the heart, the Second Vermont Republic is based on love: love of a place, of a culture, of an agriculture.

I heard much talk of the need for libertarian conservatives and anti-globalist leftists to work together. There is a sense that the old categories, the old straitjackets, must be shed. When Reverend Matchstick preaches that we need decentralism because communities that ban genetically modified food must have the power to enforce those bans, he is speaking a language that

pre-imperial conservatives will recognize—the language of local control. Russell Kirk would understand. When the “Vermont nationalist” CEO of a consulting firm insists that Vermont should have the right to determine where (and where not) its national guard is deployed, I hear an echo of the Old Right. Why should the Vermont National Guard be shipped overseas to fight the Empire’s wars?

“Long Live the Second Vermont Republic and God Bless the Disunited States of America,” concluded Thomas Naylor. You got a better idea? ■

Bill Kauffman’s most recent book is Dispatches from the Muckdog Gazette (Holt/Picador). His Look Homeward, America is due in May from ISI Books.

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Siberian Shamans at Wal-Mart

Why the discount giant won't wish you Merry Christmas

By John Zmirak

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Or new liturgical year, at least. If you look closely at your Sunday missalette, you will notice a new edition came out Nov. 27. That's about all that's left to remind us of the liturgical year we celebrate as Christians. But it doesn't have to be that way. Healthy cultures know how to insist upon their holidays, and religions cannot survive without them. The rhythm of feast and fast that pervades the Christian year is a vital part of a faith that is meant to be incarnate, embodied like Christ in the flesh and flux of the world.

In ancient Rome, the year began on the first of January, the month named for Janus, the god of transitions. He was also the first celestial war correspondent, since his temple's doors were closed during Rome's rare times of peace, but thrown open during wartime, presumably so he could watch the carnage.

Medieval Englishmen transferred New Year's Day to March 25, the Annunciation, since for them new life began with the Incarnation of Christ in the Virgin Mary's womb. Historians call this custom the "Annunciation Style." After the Reformation, the English-speaking world gradually reverted to the older practice, dating the year from January 1, which until Vatican II was the Catholic Feast of the Circumcision. Thus certain chroniclers began to call the custom of celebrating Jan. 1 the "Circumcision Style." Talk about starting the year on a painful note.

The church, which stands astride the centuries with one foot planted in this world, one in the next, has its own calendar, arranged according to eternal priorities. So the liturgical year begins on the

first Sunday of Advent, with the first intimations of the coming of Christ. The colors in church change from green to purple, and the readings turn to the prophetic, emphasizing the desolate moral wilderness in which most of the world still slept until Christ illumined it. In most parishes and homes, the Advent Wreath still serves as a potent reminder of this movement from darkness to light.

Which brings us to all those Christmas lights. They used to go up the day after Thanksgiving but have lately begun to inch further back every year. And this seems only right, since for most us the beginning of Advent is a preparation for little more than shopping and supper. The first "holiday" decorations have now started springing up the day after Halloween—a feast which itself has become unhinged from any connection to the Saints or the Suffering Souls. It now centers largely on providing the maximum sugar possible to already hyperactive children dressed up as Harry Potter characters. What's more, since the very notion of Thanksgiving implies that there's Someone Up There to Whom we must be grateful, secularists have begun to call it by the numinous title "Turkey Day." Give it ten more years, and Easter will be known as "Chocolate Egg Day."

Our liturgical holidays—with our enthusiastic co-operation—have gradually been displaced by the consumer calendar, as determined by retail stores and greeting-card companies. It doesn't help that under pressure from secularists, our public spaces are every year more thoroughly scrubbed of any Christian connotation to Christmas. In his wicked

anti-utopian novel *Love Among the Ruins*, Evelyn Waugh detailed the reverent rites surrounding "Santaclaustide." (On a much grimmer note, in Soviet Russia, Christmas was entirely replaced by a celebration of New Year's; faithful Nazis were instructed to greet each other in December with a straight salute in honor of "Yule.")

The newest piece of evidence that we're sliding in some such direction comes from Wal-Mart. According to the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, that retailer has ceased to use the word "Christmas" in its advertising and stores. When a shopper complained, she received the following message:

Walmart is a world wide organization and must remain conscious of this. The majority of the world still has different practices other than 'christmas' which is an ancient tradition that has its roots in Siberian shamanism. The colors associated with 'christmas' red and white are actually a representation of the amanita muscaria mushroom. Santa is also borrowed from the Caucasuses, mistletoe from the Celts, yule log from the Goths, the time from the Visigoth and the tree from the worship of Baal. It is a wide wide world.

After the Catholic League threatened a boycott, the employee who wrote that note was relieved of his duties. We feel bad for the poor soul, who wrote as if he'd been indulging in a certain sort of religious mushroom. But Wal-Mart still won't let its employees say "Merry Christmas."

Perhaps it's just as well. The way things are going, by the time the Christmas season actually does begin—on Dec. 25—most of us are sick to death of it and ready to move on. Besides, we need time to prepare spiritually for New Year's and Valentine's Day.

Some pious, dour Christians have started a countermovement, attempting to revive the original significance of Advent as a season of penance and prayer. Noting that in the early church people fasted three times a week throughout this season and treated it as a little Lent, these people refuse to throw holiday dinners before Dec. 24, skip office parties, and hold off on shopping and decorating their homes. They pile the kids into the minivan full of pro-life bumper stickers and take them to weekly Confession as a condition for attending those mid-December "holiday" festivities. They light their Advent wreaths in a darkened house.

This suits us curmudgeons just fine: we usually forget to decorate until it's too late—when trees just happen to be half-price. We've always gone shopping on Christmas Eve, usually in one stop at Barnes & Noble, which stays open till midnight and gift-wraps for free. We don't attend office parties either—the combination of free liquor, forced good cheer, randy co-workers, and thinly suppressed office politics make such events a great occasion for getting in a foolish fling or a fist-fight, then fired.

By insisting pedantically on the true meaning of Advent, you acquire a righteous excuse for skipping all this blather and playing Scrooge right up through Dec. 24—after which you can enjoy the holiday season all alone. Open a bottle of wine and unwrap those presents you bought yourself. A blessed Santa-claustide to one and all. ■

John Zmirak is co-author of The Bad Catholic's Guide to Good Living.

Leading Syrian businessmen fear that impending UN sanctions will be followed by American military pressure on Damascus.

The ultimate result will be the fall of Bashar Assad and a complete breakdown in authority. Sources in Damascus report that prominent Syrians have been surreptitiously transferring billions of dollars to Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the Gulf region, much of it moving in suitcases full of cash. The move reflects fears among knowledgeable Syrians that Assad's Ba'ath regime could collapse following the combined shocks of UN Resolution 1636 and the implementation of threatened U.S. air and special-forces attacks along the border. The UN resolution, calling for full Syrian co-operation with the UN team investigating the murder of Rafiq Hariri, could serve as a pretext for further action by the Pentagon. Rami Makhoul, a first cousin of Syrian President Assad and considered one of the richest men in Syria, is reportedly transferring his assets to the Gulf. Makhoul controls the country's mobile-phone network, SyriaTel, and he is the son of Adnan Makhoul, the former commander of the Syrian Republican Guard. The transfer of Syrian capital by such prominent figures who are closely linked to the government reflects two key judgments: first, that Assad will not survive international and U.S. pressure and, second, that a successor regime will not be a stable political and economic environment.



French sources report that terrorists aligned with al-Qaeda have procured SA-18 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles from the former Soviet Union,

suggesting a possible major escalation in attacks on U.S. aircraft in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Chechen mafia was the source for the missiles, which were smuggled into Turkey and then transported to terrorist cells in the Middle East. The French believe the al-Qaeda cells obtained the missiles for attacks against French airliners, but neither the report nor the targeting has been confirmed by other intelligence services. Last year the French were able to dismantle an Algerian-led terrorist cell plotting to use missiles to destroy passenger jets at Strasbourg's airport. The information on the Strasbourg missile plot came from Adnan Sadiq, an al-Qaeda associate who is currently imprisoned in Amman, Jordan. French investigators interrogated Sadiq, who said that the missiles were acquired from Georgia and transported to France. The missiles have not been recovered.



Argentine authorities have finally completed an 11-year inquiry into the 1994 suicide bombing of the Buenos Aires Jewish community center that killed 85.

Both the investigation and inquiry were marked by incompetence, and the result may be more convenient than accurate. Hezbollah member Ibrahim Hussein Berro, 21 years old at the time of the attack and a native of Lebanon, has been credited with the bombing, which has long been blamed on Iran. The identification came through testimony of three eyewitnesses who provided varying accounts of what they saw, unsupported by scientific evidence. The intact head of the bomber was reportedly dumped into a garbage bin and no forensic information was gathered when the bomb site was cleared by the police.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.

Diminishing Returns

The standard GOP playbook no longer guarantees election-night victory.

By W. James Antle III

DEPENDING ON your partisan leanings, the 2005 elections were either a harbinger of a re-emerging Democratic majority or a mere blip on the political radar screen. Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean boasted that the New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial elections “sent a powerful message that when Democrats stand up for what we believe in, we win.” Fred Barnes argued in *The Weekly Standard* that “there was no change, no earthquake. ... Ignore anyone who tells you otherwise.”

Off-year elections are not the most reliable indicator of broader political trends. The 1993 Republican sweep prefigured the historic 1994 elections, but the results in 2001—which looked much like this year’s—failed to predict the GOP’s gains in 2002. “They’re next to useless for predicting what’s going to happen,” says University of Virginia political scientist Larry Sabato.

But these elections do make useful test cases for specific campaign strategies. In Virginia, Republican Jerry Kilgore followed the GOP’s standard red-state playbook: he pounded his Democratic opponent Tim Kaine as a soft-on-crime, tax-raising liberal. Each charge had at least some basis in Kaine’s record. Kilgore lost by six percentage points. Does Virginia show that swing voters are starting to tune out the perennial Republican wedge issues?

Kilgore tried almost all of them. In fact, as his spring 10-point lead slowly evaporated, his campaign turned in increasing desperation to taxes, guns, gay rights, crime, and finally illegal

immigration in an effort to halt Kaine’s momentum. Kilgore’s strategists were sure they could beat Kaine’s education and transportation platform by painting the Democrat as too liberal for Virginia. They were wrong.

Perhaps the most famous example was the Kilgore campaign’s much-denounced death penalty ads. Relatives of murdered Virginians appeared in television spots denouncing Kaine for his opposition to capital punishment. One featured the wife of a slain policeman saying, “When Tim Kaine calls the death penalty murder, I find it offensive.” Another stated, “Tim Kaine says that Adolf Hitler doesn’t qualify for the death penalty.”

This line of attack didn’t seem as implausible at the time as it now appears in retrospect. The death penalty is supported by a strong majority in Virginia. Kaine had in the past called for a moratorium on executions and as a civil-rights lawyer had represented capital murder defendants. Law-and-order Republicans have beaten Democrats with much less.

Instead, even many capital-punishment supporters viewed the ads as a cheap shot. Kaine avoided playing to type in his response. He emphasized that his was a “faith-based opposition” to the death penalty, thus framing a liberal position in conservative religious terms, and that he would enforce the law. That’s a far cry from invoking the ACLU or coldly disputing the deterrent effect of executions in response to a hypothetical question about the murder of his wife.

As the race progressed, this became a familiar pattern. Kilgore would attack his Democratic rival from the right. On paper, Kaine should have been vulnerable. In practice, he was able to downplay his liberalism, play up his connection to popular Gov. Mark Warner, speak to religious voters about his Roman Catholic faith, and change the subject. After a while, Kilgore’s liberal-baiting began to look like an attempt to avoid talking about local issues.

Yet Kilgore had one issue at his disposal that mixed conservative ideological politics with local concerns—taxes. The GOP tax advantage stretches far beyond the red states. Since Michael Dukakis left office in 1991, Massachusetts has not had a single Democratic governor. Republicans represent only 13 percent of Massachusetts’s registered voters but they have elected three governors largely as a check against the Democratic legislature’s ability to raise taxes. No issue has driven as many upwardly mobile middle-class voters into Republican arms.

In 2004, Virginia enacted a record \$1.5 billion tax increase. The Democratic incumbent signed it into law. As lieutenant governor, Kaine supported the increase. As a candidate, he continued to praise the tax hike as a tough decision that balanced the budget and improved the state’s bond ratings. Kilgore opposed raising taxes. It’s hard to imagine an issue better designed both to rally the Republican base and win over swing voters.

Except Kilgore’s message seemed to be a flop where it might have done him

the most good. The swing areas of northern Virginia's outer suburbs voted more heavily for the candidate that wanted to promote government services than the one who opposed raising taxes.

Kaine won 60 percent of the vote in Fairfax County, which had voted for George W. Bush in 2000 and only narrowly went for John Kerry in 2004. Kilgore underperformed Bush by 10 points in Loudoun County and five in Prince William County, enough to swing both to Kaine. Why did the tax issue fail in the exurbs?

Perhaps Kilgore's own ambiguity on the issue was to blame. "He wanted to have his cake and eat it too," says Virginia Club for Growth President Phil Rodokanakis. "He told the Chamber of Commerce he wouldn't fight tax increase initiatives but told the conservative anti-tax people he was against the Warner tax increase." "So many Republicans went along with the tax increase that the party lost its brand identity," says former Virginia Republican Party chairman Pat McSweeney. "From pro-lifers to tax-cutters, Kilgore took conservative issue groups for granted," argues Republican activist Dan Gray.

Ruy Teixeira argued in the *New York Times* that middle-class exurban voters are "tax-sensitive and concerned about government waste, but not ideologically anti-government." They might balk at higher taxes in some cases, but not if there is a tangible payoff in terms of education, transportation, or health care. If the Democrats can use these issues to neutralize the Republicans' tax trump card, it would have major implications.

This year it worked in two state referenda outside Virginia. In Colorado, voters suspended the state's Taxpayer Bill of Rights for five years. They effectively raised their own taxes in order to increase education spending. Anti-tax activists were isolated as Republican Gov. Bill Owens, an erstwhile tax-cutter

once hailed by *National Review* as the nation's best governor, supported the suspension.

While education beat tax cuts in Colorado, transportation outdid taxes in Washington state. A ballot initiative to repeal a three-year, 9.5-cent-per-gallon increase in the gasoline tax failed. Voters preferred having the \$8.5 billion revenue to fix local bridges and roads.

In both cases, the anti-tax vote was still substantial. The Colorado initiative passed with just 52 percent. Washingtonians defeated the gas-tax rollback with only 53 percent. But whenever voters opt to raise their own taxes, Republican operatives should take notice. Are taxes no longer the GOP's premier wedge issue? Writing in *The Weekly Standard*, Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam compared Reaganite Republicans who "view across-the-board tax cuts as a permanent ticket to political power" to "aging hippies who never quite got over Woodstock."

Few Republican politicians seem ready to update. To the extent they read any national significance into the 2005 results, they blame the personalities at the head of the party more than the policies. "A lot of people want to say Republicans are having problems because of stands we take on specific issues," Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) told reporters. "I've seen polls where that's not the reason. The reason is we're not governing."

It wasn't lost on GOP elected officials that President Bush's last-minute campaign appearance with Kilgore—who up until the last 24 hours had been citing scheduling conflicts to stay out of the president's shadow—didn't do any good and may have made things worse in northern Virginia. Even long-shot candidates started pointing fingers. "If Bush's numbers were where they were a year ago... I think we would have won on Tuesday," complained Doug Forrester, the Republican gubernatorial candidate in New Jersey. Not once during his cam-

paign did Forrester lead his Democratic opponent in the polls.

Other Republicans decided to revive long-simmering feuds between the party's moderate and conservative wings. Congressman Charles Bass (R-N.H.) declared, "It's time to govern from the middle." Congressman Tom Davis (R-Va.) warned the *Washington Post* that GOP pro-lifers might antagonize suburbanites by pushing too hard for the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*.

Davis did, however, acknowledge voter "frustration over the war in Iraq," getting closer to the source of his party's woes. Even the Republican base is starting to turn against some of the GOP's biggest priorities. A Diageo/Hotline poll found that 41 percent of Republicans believed the country was on the wrong track. Strong approval of Bush among Republicans was at its lowest level since the poll began, with Iraq listed as the top reason for disapproval. "Iraq is at the foundation of Bush's problems," says Sabato.

Yet the GOP's problems may run deeper. Ten years after winning control of Congress, the Republican majority has become stagnant. The party's candidates have tried to run on a platform that consists largely of warmed-over Contract With America agenda items and bashing Democrats, a message swing voters mostly find irrelevant. Iraq and Bush's leadership in the war on terror briefly revived Republican fortunes. Faced with falling poll numbers on both fronts, the party finds itself adrift.

The GOP has gained electoral strength over the last 20 years by using conservative means to address pressing voter concerns. But a political party can't hold power forever by trying to solve the problems of 1980 or 1994. If the Virginia governor's race demonstrates anything of national significance, it shows that if Republicans forget this they can ridicule their opponents as liberals as much they want—and still lose. ■

The Cost of Sycophancy

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has just suffered his first parliamentary defeat—an overwhelming one—since taking office more than two terms ago. It rejected

his insistence on imitating George W. Bush's limitation on civil liberties and amendment of the right to *habeas corpus* to serve the war on terror.

Coincidentally, Britain's former ambassador in Washington, Sir Christopher Meyer, is publishing an indiscreet book, *D.C. Confidential*, on the relations of Prime Minister Blair with President George W. Bush as they went to war against Saddam Hussein lacking an internationally defensible *casus belli*.

There were, as we know now, and as the people in the know knew then, no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. (The notion that "all the Western intelligence services believed that Iraq had WMD" is not true. They all knew that the Americans believed it was true. But the UN inspectors in Vienna believed that Iraq had abandoned its WMD efforts after the 1991 war, and they intended to verify this.)

Meyer himself favored the invasion. His astonishment was that Blair paid so little attention to British interests and the potential weight of British influence on the war's preparations. He says Blair could have prevented catastrophic and avoidable errors.

He says Blair seemed so intoxicated by the glamour of the White House and the power of the American presidency that he effectively abdicated his responsibilities to Britain. He fawned on Bush. Why, one doesn't understand. British prime ministers in the past took themselves seriously.

Harold Wilson was prime minister of Britain during a troubled national passage (1964-1970) and Lyndon Johnson,

never a man to take no for an answer, urged him to send troops to Vietnam, at least for show—even if it were only a company from the Brigade of Guards.

Wilson said no, possessing the common sense to see that Britain had no interest in what looked to be as disastrous an adventure as France's failed attempt to put down the Communist uprising in Indochina. Britain had already been through a couple of unpleasant decolonizations, and Wilson saw no reason why it should repeat the experience to please Washington.

In 2002-2003, the situation was the same. The U.S. wanted Britain as part of the invasion because this would recall the wartime alliance—the "good war" and all that, lending legitimacy to Bush's policy. According to Meyer, Scooter Libby said Britain was really the only ally that mattered.

One may recall that, as the invasion neared and Britain was still trying to get a second U.N. Security Council resolution favoring the invasion (to placate its own public opinion), Donald Rumsfeld unhelpfully told the world that the United States really didn't care whether Britain came along on the invasion or not; it wasn't needed.

This was bluff. Britain was needed for public relations, but its troops were also needed. Blair could have called the bluff. His subsequent claim was that looking for a second vote would have been useless because Jacques Chirac of France had promised to veto any Security Council vote favoring invasion. This is true, but that was not the reason Blair and Bush did not press for a second vote.

They had found that it was impossible to line up a Security Council majority. Even the weak nonpermanent members of the council had backed off. Moreover, had Britain and the U.S. been able to get majority approval and Chirac then vetoed, they would have had a moral victory over France and could have gone ahead with the invasion anyway, saying they had international approval despite the French. Blair and Bush realized that they were defeated, even without a French veto. So they threw in their cards.

Meyer also says that Britain could have demanded clear and serious preparations for a start to reconstruction immediately after Iraq was defeated, when the U.S. command abandoned the country to looting and disorder. ("Things happen," as Rumsfeld distantly observed, as if he had nothing to do with it.) This failure prepared the ground for the present insurrection.

Sycophancy toward Washington has been a curious characteristic of the Blair government from the start, affecting fundamental issues of British national interest and security. Blair's defense minister, Geoff Hoon, has declared that Britain's military forces are being reorganized in a manner that would preclude independent wartime operations, such as the Falklands Islands reconquest in 1982. The Blair government has decided that Britain's armed forces will never again need to function independently of the United States.

I don't know whether this should be taken as a flattering grant of trust to the United States or an astoundingly credulous one. But were I British, it would make me uneasy, particularly in the light of what is going on now in Iraq. ■

William Pfaff writes from Paris. Copyright the International Herald Tribune.

The Japanese Miracle

America is a great country and has a lot going for it, but through misguidance and misgovernment we are quickly squandering the power and wealth previous generations have created.

To put this in perspective, this is how America compares with a country as small as Japan.

- Japan is a country with only 4% of our land mass (smaller than California) and is 90% mountainous and infertile.
- Japan has minimal natural resources — no oil, no coal, and no iron, just fish!
- To manufacture a product, Japan must import all of its required resources. Even after this expense, they have an \$80 billion/year balance-of-trade surplus with America and also accumulate one-third of the world's savings (*US News & World Report*, 3/19/01).
- Few Americans realize that Japan generates on par or higher average wage rates than the U.S.
- The average Japanese family has a savings equivalent to \$117,000 (*US News & World Report*, 3/19/01).

American families average \$85,000 in debt (*USA Today*, 10/4/04). Japan must be doing something right! Better planning, direction, and a more responsive government are keys to their success. They have learned much from us and have improved on it. Perhaps it would be wise for us to study their improvements for our own benefit.

Compare this to:

- America has borrowed \$667 billion from Japan and \$194 billion from China to keep our government running and to give ourselves tax refunds, pay for our internal budget deficit (\$413 billion/year), and our current account deficit (\$665 billion/year).
- America is a large country (2 1/2 times Japan's population, plus much land and natural resources), but we are producing less, importing more, and borrowing more than ever before as well as selling our irreplaceable assets to pay for imports and debt.

- America's wealth was accumulated by previous generations, as we had world-beating manufacturing capabilities. America is presently relinquishing much of its manufacturing by *outsourcing* (giving away our technology and jobs to foreign companies and having them produce for us in their countries, thus totally dismantling our industrial base) and *insourcing* (subsidizing foreign companies to operate in America to produce for their benefit and their profit, which quickly displaces many American-owned factories).
- We are becoming vulnerable and dependent on foreign companies for jobs and products.
- In central Ohio alone (a seven-county area within 60 miles of Columbus), there are 62 Japanese-owned and 67 European-owned American corporations that control a large percentage of the manufacturing in the region.
- American-owned manufacturing is becoming obsolete and second-rate. We are no longer competitive with Japan, China, and other countries.
- America is the only major industrialized country that depends on foreign suppliers for large amounts of steel. It also depends on foreigners for critical inputs needed by strategic industries.
- America is selling many of its best companies to foreign corporations (example: Chrysler is now a German-owned company).

All this is happening while America is trying to fight three wars: the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War, and the internal terrorist war. We are incurring massive debt and are dependent on foreign sources for funding to continue this.

While Japan is creating an industrial miracle - America's industry is collapsing or selling out. 8,600 of our best wealth producing companies have been sold to foreign interests in the past 10 years.

Please take the time to write to the president and your congressperson with your thoughts.

Can't America Do Better?

Log on to our website <www.economyincrisis.org> to view the many thousands of American companies sold since 1979.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[Rent]

Some of My Best Freinds

By Steve Sailer

IN A BRILLIANT CAREER MOVE, the unknown and impoverished stage composer Jonathan Larson dropped dead at the age of 35 on the day before his musical "Rent" opened in 1996. Adding to the subsequent tidal wave of media hype, his death occurred on almost exactly the 100th anniversary of the opera upon which "Rent's" plot was based, *La Bohème*.

While Puccini's tragic tale of starving artists and their consumptive lovers was a nostalgia piece set in Paris during the Romantic rebellion of the 1830s, "Rent" is a self-congratulatory celebration of a contemporary surrogate family of AIDS-ridden downtown Manhattan songwriters, drag queens, and lesbian performance artists engaged in the eternal bohemian struggle to *épater le bourgeois*. Unshocked, the bourgeoisie have made "Rent" the eighth-longest-running musical in Broadway history, where it's still chugging along in its 10th year, with ticket prices running up to \$100.

Director Chris Columbus has now crafted a relatively faithful film version employing most of the original cast who, like the rest of us, are no longer as fresh-faced and appealing as they were in 1996.

To widespread surprise, it turned out that Larson hadn't died of AIDS but of a freak aortic aneurysm. Larson was that

increasing rarity, a straight Broadway composer. He was a nice Jewish boy from Westchester County who wanted to revolutionize the musical by making it relevant to today's young people by featuring the kind of music the kids are listening to on the street... well, to be precise, the kind of 1970s electric-guitar rock that Larson had listened to as a teenager in his White Plains bedroom.

In "Rent," Larson's alter ego, the nerdy narrator Mark—played by Anthony Rapp, who bears an unfortunate resemblance to Wilbur in "Mr. Ed"—is an experimental filmmaker. He squats in a grungy Alphabet City loft with Larson's romantic image of himself, cute Roger (Adam Pascal, who looks like Dana Carvey playing Garth Algar in "Wayne's World"), an ex-junkie rock guitarist with AIDS.

The two heterosexual white guys have all these cool minority friends! Indeed, "Rent" functions as a sensitive liberal male's wish-fulfillment fantasy about a new and improved form of diversity. Hanging with diverse pals demonstrates your moral superiority over other Caucasians, but, frustratingly for young white social climbers, actual live minorities are seldom content to play their assigned roles as silent props in your fashionable lifestyle. In particular, real black friends might insist on playing their hideous rap music and real gay friends their sissy disco music. In "Rent," however, the diverse trendsetters all like 1970s white-boy rock, thus validating Mark's and Roger's hipness quotients.

Although there have been some popular musicals like "Grease" and "Little Shop of Horrors" that use 1950s rock 'n' roll, the later, louder rock styles haven't been employed much in musicals as Broadway retreats ever more into its gay ghetto.

Also, as "Rent" illustrates, roaring guitars make showtune lyrics hard to follow. The more the actors try to enunciate clearly enough to be understood the less they sound like genuine rock singers.

"Rent's" lyrics aren't much worth following anyway. "Seasons of Love," for example, opens the movie version with perhaps the most ponderously inane first line in musical history: "525,600 minutes"—the number of minutes in a year, in case you were wondering, which you probably weren't.

"Rent's" mediocrity is thorough. The lyrics are lame and the melodies forgettable. As a songwriter, Larson tried too hard without working hard enough. Even the fictional brilliance of the characters is underwhelming. The last great song the doomed guitarist spends a year composing turns out to be as generic as the rest, while the avant-garde auteur's cinematic breakthrough is home movies of his friends partying.

(Where does talent go these days? Into videogames? Movie trailers? Marketing tie-ins? Talking points?)

Modern bohemians can't generate the I'll-show-them aggression needed to create the truly new and worthwhile when everybody within 50 miles of East Greenwich Village lavishly lauds transgressive artists. With the wind at their backs, it's hardly surprising they're coasting. No wonder creativity in this country is in decline—tolerance is sapping the artistic urge. As Jacques Barzun wrote, "A movement in thought or art produces its best work during the uphill fight to oust the enemy. ... Victory brings on imitation and ultimately Boredom."

Boredom with a capital "B" sums up "Rent." ■

Rated a hard PG-13 for mature thematic material involving drugs and sexuality and for some strong language.

BOOKS

[*The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq*, George Packer, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 467 pages]

The Worst and the Dullest

By Scott McConnell

THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM has room for one book at a time per subject. David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* caught exactly what the prevailing mood wanted captured about the Vietnam War: the hubris of a WASPish foreign-policy establishment in its final act, overconfident and trusting of its technocratic rational models as it steered the nation into bloody quagmire.

For a brief time during the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, Kenneth Pollack's hawkish *The Threatening Storm* held a portion of the stage. In Washington, it was the book most often seen plucked from briefcases for perusal by busy suits on the Metro—a city giving in to the case for war.

Now, with that war well into its third year, George Packer's *Assassins' Gate* has emerged as the book that most nearly shapes an emerging consensus. It's not quite a bestseller—apparently not that many Americans take pleasure in buying books about Iraq. But among political readers, the *New Yorker* correspondent's work—its title comes from the name U.S. troops have given the gate separating the American Green Zone from the rest of Baghdad—is on everyone's lips. Packer appears as a guest on the most watched Sunday talk shows; he is praised by government officials who were close to the decision-making process as getting the complicated story more or less exactly right. And deservedly so.

Certainly *The Assassins' Gate* works as vivid journalism. It is one thing to relate how Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon

made no plans for post-invasion contingencies, even as it succeeded in blocking knowledgeable military and State Department officials from the postwar planning process. Or to describe how Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith—entrusted by Rumsfeld to prepare for the post-invasion—appointed his former law partner Michael Mobbs, a man with no relevant experience, to head civil administration in postwar Baghdad, and this personality—after clearing the matter with Scooter Libby—awarded Halliburton a \$7 billion no-bid contract.

But it is even better to learn that Mobbs first showed up in the region “looking as if he were dressed for West Palm Beach” and, when he was unable to reach any decisions about civil administration, abandoned Baghdad to hang out in the Kurdish area with Ahmad Chalabi's Iraqi exiles. Or to read that on day two of the war, Albert Cevallos, a young USAID human-rights official, was standing with some civil-affairs officers on the Iraq-Kuwait border. “Albert, what's the plan for policing?” one of the civil-affairs officers asked. Cevallos replied, “I thought you knew the plan.” “No, we thought you knew.” “Haven't you talked to ORHA [the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, the official postwar authority]?” “No, no one talked to us.” Cevallos later related that it felt like a Laurel and Hardy routine.

Two weeks after this exchange, looting broke out, and the American occupation authorities stood by and observed passively. The estimated damage was \$12 billion, and in Packer's telling, a signal to all Iraqis that the Americans had not sent a serious force to rule Iraq.

A premise of such reporting, of course, is that the invasion could have worked if planned more carefully or, more, that Iraq could have been truly liberated by American arms. Though this perspective would be considered shortsighted by most readers of this magazine, it is a boon to Packer's reporting; it gives empathy and breadth to his portraits of the many administrators and

intellectuals who planned the war and now work in Baghdad. As a backer of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Packer had more access than an Iraq War skeptic could have gained. And his disappointed “liberal hawk” perspective may be what the country is ready to embrace as its mainstream conventional view.

It would be many weeks after the invasion before official Washington recognized that things were not going well in liberated Iraq. While administration officials were still toasting one another at Washington dinner parties and mocking Colin Powell for his tedious insistence on international coalitions, Jay Garner, Rumsfeld's man in Baghdad for the first weeks of the occupation, came by the White House to say goodbye and to deliver a memo that Iraq was well on its way to stability. Bush, apparently joking, asked him, “You want to do Iran for the next one?”

While Packer's reporting on the war's subsequent course—from within and without the Green Zone—is first rate, this book's claim to lasting importance lies in its first 60 pages, in which he explores the ideas of the men who conceived of the invasion in the first place. While Washington is now immersed in the issue of whether and how the intelligence about Saddam's weapons programs was distorted, it is necessary to remember that the squeezing of murky intelligence data to fit a preconceived pattern was the work of men for whom the concept of the war had been marinating a long time, well before the dubious reports of Saddam's purchase of yellowcake and plans for aluminum tubes.

It is in this section that Packer's liberal-hawk perspective may serve him best. It undoubtedly helped cement his friendship with such pro-war writers as the leftist Paul Berman, who argued in an intense book that Islamic fundamentalism was a variant of 20th-century European fascism, and the Iraqi exile Kanan Makiya, author of the comprehensive anti-Saddam tract *Republic of Fear*. His insight about liberals who began to shed their Vietnam-era resistance to military interventionism in the

mid-1990s—"the first sip of this drink called humanitarian intervention carried a special thrill"—is perhaps born in introspection.

But while the exiles and liberal hawks held some cultural influence that helped grease the path to war, they had no real power. The neoconservatives who staffed the Pentagon and Vice President Cheney's office did, and they too seemed to treat Packer as a friendly, opening up to him in interviews to his book's great benefit.

Packer explores the evolution of the neoconservative case for war with great care and, for the most part, empathy, taking time to analyze its diverse strands, its origins in the muddled end of the first Gulf War, judiciously separating out the absurd from the plausible, the idealistic from the frankly Likudnik. He can be dead-on funny about such sideshows as the Leo Strauss cult. "At Yale," he writes, "these disciples—almost exclusively male—wore bow ties and joined clubs with aristocratic-sounding names and generally cultivated an air of special knowledge and 'excellence.'"

Discussion of the neoconservative role in the run-up to war has been made a sensitive issue, the Likudnik aspect especially so. As the war has gone sour and interest in the neocons has bubbled up

around the globe, the neoconservatives have devoted no small amount of ink to either denying that neoconservatism exists, to claiming that users of the word are motivated by anti-Semitism, or to burying the concept under clouds of obfuscation—as in, for instance, presenting George W. Bush as the ultimate neoconservative, a ploy that seems to have fallen out of rhetorical fashion as the president's poll ratings have dropped.

IF THE **ASSASSINS' GATE** WINDS UP ON COLLEGE READING LISTS AND GOES THROUGH MANY PAPERBACK EDITIONS, A GREAT MANY AMERICANS WILL ACQUIRE A FINELY HONED VIEW OF THE **NEOCONSERVATIVE** ROLE IN IGNITING THE WAR.

Nonetheless, truth and history have their own claims, and there was a group of men with similar ideologies and interlocking personal and institutional ties who did much to make the war happen. It is likely that Packer's rich, nuanced, and in several ways manifestly philo-Semitic account of these men will do lasting damage to such efforts at historical cover-up. If—as seems quite possible—*The Assassins' Gate* winds up on college reading lists and goes through many paperback editions, a great many Americans will acquire a finely honed

view of the neoconservative role in igniting the war, one that may be better than they could get anywhere else.

Packer is generally laudatory of Paul Wolfowitz, an idealist with a talent of charming powerful people, "a good boy, the kind on whom adults fasten their dreams." He suggestively writes that both Bush and Wolfowitz, who were never close themselves, yearned to break free of the "stifling authority" of Bush's father, the balance-of-power realist who stepped

back from finishing the job the first time around. For Wolfowitz, "Iraq stood for different things—an unfinished war, Arab tyranny, weapons proliferation, a strategic threat to oil, American weakness, Democratic fecklessness—and regime change there became the foreign-policy jackpot." He is less indulgent towards Douglas Feith and David Wurmser and the "Clean Break" memorandum they, along with Richard Perle and others, prepared for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996. He gives "Clean Break" the most precise analysis I've seen in the American press, explicating it through the lens of Wurmser's subsequent AEI-published volume, which argued (in 1999) that America's taking out Saddam would solve Israel's strategic problems and leave the Palestinians essentially helpless.

Wurmser joined Douglas Feith's Counter Terrorism Evaluation Group, which collected raw data from Iraqi defectors in order to prove that Saddam had ties to al-Qaeda and would give WMD to terrorists. Later he worked for John Bolton before moving on to Cheney's office. His and Feith's work in intelligence gathering involved taking data that had been dismissed by the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the State Department and fashioning it into bullet points and PowerPoint slides and

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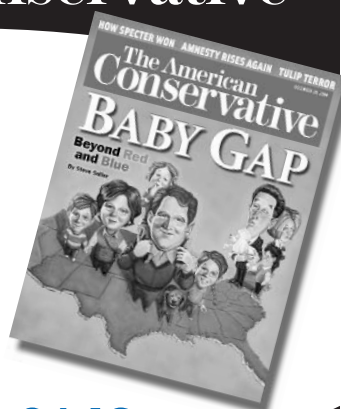
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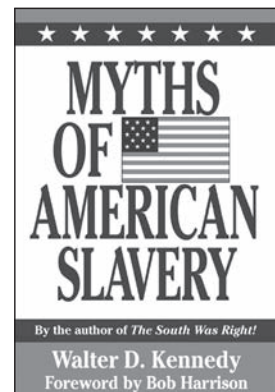
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piping it into the White House, where the Pentagon neocons had allies in Scooter Libby and Elliott Abrams. Packer concludes, “this configuration of like-minded officials dispersed on key islands across the national-security archipelago allowed the intelligence ‘product’ ... to circumvent the normal interagency process, in which the unconverted ... might have raised objections. It was an efficient way of working if you knew what you wanted to achieve.” As Richard Perle told Packer, it was pointless to look back at old articles in the foreign-policy journals. What mattered was who held positions of power. “If,” Perle said, “Bush had staffed his administration with a group of people selected by Brent Scowcroft and Jim Baker, which might well have happened, then it could have been different. ... The ideas are only important as they reside in the minds of people who were involved directly in the decision process.”

The ultimate responsibility for the war, or course, belongs to Cheney and Rumsfeld, who chose to staff the administration with neoconservative ideologues, and to George W. Bush. (A question that puzzles me is how anyone who had drafted position papers for a foreign government could receive a security clearance, much less a top foreign-policy job, but apparently this never troubled Cheney or Rumsfeld.)

The issue of how the Iraq War began will likely engage future historians as much as the beginning of World War I. It still remains, in a way, a mystery: Packer poignantly cites Richard Haass, the former director of policy planning at the State Department, as saying he will go to his grave not knowing why the United States invaded Iraq. “A decision was not made—a decision happened, and you can’t say when or how.”

In their efforts to probe the question, future historians are likely to go back to Packer’s work again and again, for it is superbly written and wonderfully judged, well sourced and speculative, a fusion of contemporary history and journalism at the highest level. ■

[*A War Like No Other*, Victor Davis Hanson, Random House, 416 pages]

It’s All Greek to Victor Davis Hanson

By Gary Brecher

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON has been writing the same thing for years now: cheerleading for the Iraq War spiced up with classical military history. Doesn’t matter whether he’s writing a 400-page book or a 1000-word column for National Review Online, Hanson uses the same formula. And it’s sure worked out well for him. Hanson’s got his fans convinced that Socrates himself would volunteer for duty in Fallujah, if only he didn’t have to drink that damn goblet of hemlock.

Now Hanson’s newest project, *A War Like No Other*, drags one of my heroes, the great Greek military historian Thucydides, into his seedy propaganda campaign. *A War Like No Other* is Hanson’s retelling of Thucydides’ great story of the Peloponnesian War, the grim 30-year struggle between Athens and Sparta. That’s a pretty conceited project, even for Hanson. After all, this is Thucydides we’re talking about, a genius who practically invented the genre of military history. Hanson retelling Thucydides’ story is like Penny Marshall trying to remake “Raging Bull.”

But this book is even more confused than most of Hanson’s work. It doesn’t make sense at any level, from sentence to overall argument. What’s weird is that nobody seems to have noticed. I’ve read a lot of reviews of this book from big papers like the *New York Times* and they all treat Hanson like he’s beyond criticism. Seems all you have to do is sound like a professor and fill up pages and everybody thinks you’re the Xenophon of Fresno.

If these reviewers had actually taken a good close look at Hanson’s writing, they could not have taken this book seriously. One of my favorite boners is Hanson’s reference to “the madcap killing on the island of Corcyra.” “Madcap,” huh? That must’ve been the only madcap massacre I ever heard of—a real laugh riot. Maybe Benny Hill was doing the beheading that day. Of course, Hanson doesn’t mean “madcap,” he means something like “mad.” But he’s too vain to check his work, and his publisher must have given the copy editors the word not to offend the great VDH by quibbling about his diction.

Some of the other mistakes are on a whole different scale. Take the title, *A War Like No Other*. If Hanson believes that the Peloponnesian War was really so unique, why does he spend his first chapters making far-fetched connections between that war and every other war in history? If he wanted his title to reflect what he actually argues, Hanson should have called this book *A War Like Nearly Every Other, Especially Iraq*.

Yeah, Iraq—that war haunts this book, but the writing is so sloppy you can never be sure exactly what the link between the Peloponnesian War and our self-inflicted Iraq disaster is supposed to be. Hanson is fairly clear on one thing: ancient Athens equals contemporary America. But even though he says this over and over, it never really makes sense. This is typical of Hanson’s work—the more often he says something, the more confusing and contradictory it becomes. He claims 9/11 was “our Peloponnesian War.” But it wasn’t: 9/11 didn’t trigger a lethal plague, didn’t kill a huge chunk of our population, didn’t cause the fall of our country, and didn’t involve naval war, sieges, pitched battle, or in fact any of the strategies of the Peloponnesian War. The only similarity I can see is that they were both bad scenes, man. Real bummers.

And it gets worse. Take this gem: “We [Americans], like the Athenians, are all-powerful, but insecure, professedly pacifist yet nearly always in some sort of conflict, often more desirous of being

liked than being respected, and proud of our arts and letters even as we are more adept at war.”

Have a good long look at that sentence and you’ll notice that every single bit of it is false. For starters, Athens wasn’t “all-powerful”—they lost the war. And neither is the U.S., as the Iraqi insurgents remind us every day. And America isn’t “insecure.” In fact, we’re not nearly insecure enough. If we’d been a little more insecure, we might have opted out of the war.

Next Hanson calls Athens and the U.S. “professedly pacifist.” Sez who? When did America ever call itself pacifist? I’d cancel my citizenship if we ever did that. For that matter, when did ancient Athens ever put on a peace sign? Just because they had beards doesn’t mean they were hippies. The Athenians were proud of their ability to go from civilian to military mode in a hurry. That’s why they made statues of Athena with her armor half-on, half-off: to remind everybody they could play it rough or nice.

Then comes that bit about how we and the Athenians want to be “liked rather than respected.” I don’t have a clue what that means. My high-school counselor used to talk like that, which is why nobody ever listened to him.

IF ATHENS EQUALS AMERICA, AS HANSON KEEPS SAYING, THEN WE’VE GOT A PROBLEM: ATHENS LOST. SO IF HANSON’S NEOCON READERS BUY THE PARALLEL, THEY SHOULD BE WETTING THEIR PANTS AND PREPARING TO CONVERT TO ISLAM.

Hanson ends with the most ridiculous claim of all: America and Athens are “proud of our arts and letters even as we are more adept at war.” Well, uh, no. I can’t believe a classics professor actually wrote that. For one thing, Athenian infantry wasn’t very good. The Thebans and Spartans were better, as Hanson himself says several times in this book. But more important, here’s a little list of ancient Athenians who are generally considered pretty darn good at “arts and letters”—Plato, Aristotle,

Phanes, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Lysias, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aristotle ... I admit I had to look some of those names up, and I’m not saying I read them—just know their names and a little about their reps. But then I don’t put on airs about being an expert on ancient Greece. The fact that Hanson gets away with saying this is as clear an argument as any against the tenure system in our universities.

He keeps dropping hints that Athens equals America and the Peloponnesian War equals us in Iraq, but here again there are huge logical problems mainstream reviewers don’t even notice. For starters, how does this fit into the Hanson project of using ancient Greece to make Iraq look good? If Athens equals America, as Hanson keeps saying, then we’ve got a problem: Athens lost. So if Hanson’s neocon readers buy the parallel, they should be wetting their pants and preparing to convert to Islam.

There’s just no way Thucydides’ story can be spun as a happy tale. It was a bad war for nearly everybody—except the Persians, who sat on the sidelines giggling and feeding money to keep the carnage going. (Sound familiar? Anyone for Basra?) Here’s the truth about that war: the Greeks died at each others’ hands in nasty ways, locked inside plague-ridden

cities or speared like frogs as they tried to squirm out of sinking triremes. Athens was bankrupted. A bunch of macho homosexual Spartans, sort of like SF leather boys with red cloaks, collaborated with the Persians to bring down the coolest city-state ever. How can you spin that as something we can apply to the war in Iraq?

The key fact about the ancient Athenians is that they weren’t like us—at all. I admit, Hanson has a quote from Thucydides himself claiming that “human

nature is unchanging across time and space and thus predictable.” Well, Thucydides was wrong. We worship those Athenians—and they deserve it—but face it, they said and did a lot of stuff that was just plain wrong.

One thing historians have learned in the two-and-a-half-thousand years since Thucydides wrote is that people change deeply from one time and place to another. That’s why no modern military historian with a conscience would peddle the old notion that there’s a standard-issue “human nature” that applies to Genghis Khan and Woody Allen. And the differences are central to our problems in Iraq. Take the question of killing civilians in towns that resist attack. No ancient army had a problem wiping out the whole male population of sacked cities and divvying up the females for use or sale.

For better or for worse, modern armies just can’t do that any more. We kill lots of civilians, but if possible we do it from 30,000 feet, and we have to make it seem like we didn’t mean to do it. So when we’re facing urban guerrilla war, we can’t do what the ancients did—wipe out the place, kill every one of ‘em.

That’s why you don’t hear too much about urban guerrillas before the 20th century: before then urban guerrilla warfare as a strategy was civic suicide. We’re squeamish, and those classical dudes weren’t. If you doubt that, try reading the commemorative plaques Assyrian kings put up outside conquered cities. There’s one I remember—wish I could forget—that brags about how the king “flayed all the chief men of the town alive.” We don’t have that option. Not even Cheney really thinks we can just nuke Fallujah. I’m sure he daydreams about it, but it never gets “translated into policy,” as they say in D.C.

To hide the ancient Greeks’ downright weirdness, Hanson avoids mentioning all their rough edges, their weird religion, their hobby of bugging boys, their Wahhabite take on women’s place. Everything about them was alien. For example, you know

where they kept their coins? In their mouths. Yuk.

The grimmest joke in the book is that there really is one parallel that holds up when you compare the Peloponnesian War to America's military history. You bet there is. But here's the kicker: it's the one connection Hanson would never, ever allow into print. I'm talking about the creepy way that our Iraq disaster resembles the Athenian invasion of Sicily. When Hanson says, describing the preparations for the expedition to Syracuse, that the Athenians' "[i]ntelligence about the nature of Sicilian warfare, and the resources of the enemies was either flawed or nonexistent," you can't help thinking of Bremer, Perle, the "cakewalk," and the WMDs. When Hanson talks about how the Persians sat back and watched their enemies to the west bleed each other, you can't help thinking about the way Iran helped draw us

into Iraq by feeding the suckers at the Bush administration fake intel via Chalabi. Then they settled down patiently to watch. And they enjoyed every minute of the war, cheering when we blasted Saddam's guys and cheering even harder when the insurgents started blasting our troops—with the help of new IED designs straight out of Tehran. When Hanson talks about the way the Persians just reabsorbed the Greek colonies in Asia Minor after the Peloponnesian War had drained the whole Hellenic world of power, you can't help but imagine the way all of Shia Iraq will be smoothly absorbed into a Greater Iran when we face facts and cut and run.

And that brings us back to the big question: what did Hanson think he was doing with this book? If I gave him any credit for subtlety, I'd almost wonder if he'd changed sides—because if this book makes any sense, it's as a bitter satire, with Thucydides' gloomy story of Greeks slaughtering each other to the benefit of their Persian enemy as an allegory for our Fools' Crusade in Iraq.

But Hanson is not a subtle guy, so that's not what's going on. This book is just a point on the graph of Hanson's decline. It shows him in the late stages of a wild ego trip, getting more and more thoughtless as he starts believing his own press. The whole book stinks of vanity, from the idea of thinking you could improve on Thucydides to the careless writing, the sleazy connections between alien cultures, and the big blind spot at the center of it all. Hanson has become so sure that the ancient Greeks are with him and the neocons that he can't see how Thucydides' story silently condemns our Iraq adventure. If only we could resurrect the real Thucydides and commission him to do a history of Bush's invasion of Iraq. Now that would be worth reading. But I don't think Victor Davis Hanson would enjoy it. ■

Gary Brecher writes the War Nerd column for the eXile, a Moscow-based weekly newspaper.

[The 50% American: Immigration and National Identity in an Age of Terror, Stanley A. Renshon, Georgetown University Press, 260 pages]

Dueling Loyalties

By Howard Sutherland

RECENT WEEKS' RIOTS IN France are an unpleasant reminder that in high-immigration countries the mere fact of citizenship is no guarantee of loyalty, or even attachment, to the nation. Although the media do their best not to remind us of it, the rioters in France seem to be Muslim immigrants and children of immigrants—the majority of whom were born in France and hold French passports. But how French are they, in any meaningful sense? Where do their hearts lie, with *la douce France* or with a revived and aggressive Islam thrusting into the heart of Europe? As their numbers grow and the ethnic French population does not, what sort of nation will France become? Will there be a France in 100 years?

Variations of all of these questions apply equally to America. In this book, Stanley Renshon, a psychoanalyst and political science professor at the City University of New York, examines one of the toughest challenges to national unity that America faces today: the conundrum of dual—or multiple—citizenship. While his proposals fall short of dealing with the threats he ably describes, Renshon has done the cause of intelligent immigration reform a great service with this book.

At first glance, it is hard to understand why dual citizenship should be a problem in America. The naturalization oath of allegiance to the United States of America opens with these words: "I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty,

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of whom or with which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen.” Not hard to understand: in America there must be a very strong presumption against dual citizenship. But so often in the funhouse mirror world of U.S. immigration law, though, what is written is not what is enforced.

Thanks to congressional sloth, executive-branch indifference, and creative lawmaking by the Supreme Court, especially the *Afroyim v. Rusk* decision of 1967, it is very easy to hold U.S. citizenship while being a citizen of one or more other countries, and U.S. citizenship is almost impossible to lose. Renshon cites a number of examples of American citizens freely engaging in activities that would have cost them their citizenship in earlier times. Juan Hernández, U.S. citizen and professor, held a cabinet-level post in Vicente Fox’s Mexican government dedicated to smoothing the path of Mexican emigration, illegal and legal, to the United States while ensuring that Mexico retains emigrants’—and Mexican-Americans’—primary loyalty. Muhamed Sacirbey, dual national, served as Bosnia’s foreign minister. Aleksander Einseln retired from the U.S. Army and went to Estonia to be chief of the Estonian army. Even Hussein Aidid, the son and successor of the infamous Somali warlord Mohamed Aidid, was a former Marine and naturalized U.S. citizen. Naturalized Mexican immigrants run for office in Mexican elections and win. None has lost his U.S. citizenship. In years past, we required minors who were dual nationals to choose their allegiance at majority. No more.

The flipside of the U.S. government’s cavalier attitude about American citizenship is the proliferation of dual citizenship in other nations. Renshon’s research shows that approximately 150 nations around the world accept dual citizenship. Many third-world countries that are the primary source of immigrants and illegal aliens in the United States actively encourage it, following the Mexican model of trying to retain their natives’ primary allegiance—and keep those remitted *Yanqui* dollars

flowing in—even though they have left the country. Ominously, Mexico, which had always had draconian nationality laws—and still has very strict naturalization procedures—has recently made massive changes to its constitution and laws to permit dual citizenship for the express purpose of keeping the exploding population of Mexicans in the United States as Mexican as possible. Of the major immigrant-senders, only South Korea does not have a dual-citizenship law—but it is writing one.

Looking at the upheavals in American life and culture over the last 40 years, Renshon contends that we are in the “Second Civil War.” While the first one was fought on battlefields over concrete issues, the second is being fought everywhere over everything. Among the casualties is a solid sense of American nationhood, as well as the confidence to require immigrants to assimilate and give them a model to assimilate to. Renshon distinguishes between citizenship, a legal category, and nationality.

Nationality, which Renshon sees in psychological terms as the emotional ties and core understandings that bind people together, is more important. Natives are born into their nationality, while immigrants need help to foster the

Wall Street Journal Americanism. For Renshon, the love we must encourage includes a warmth and affection for, appreciation of, pride in, commitment to, and support of the United States, its institutions, people, and way of life. A tall order and, interestingly, one with nothing distinctively American about it. The same list of particulars would serve as well for France, Russia, or Mexico.

Renshon’s psychoanalytical view of the America immigrants come to today leaves him very worried. What we need, and lack, is a society determined to foster the love of country that enables immigrants to become truly American. Instead, our Second Civil War has so weakened our civic framework and confidence in America as an essentially good nation that we have stopped requiring new Americans to become American. We not only no longer require assimilation, we encourage immigrants to keep their native languages and cultures. We educate their children in their native languages. We even provide ballots in foreign languages—though English proficiency is supposed to be a requirement for naturalization. Effectively, we tell immigrants that they can come here and not adapt—it is America that will adapt to their sensibilities. It is

IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR IMMIGRANTS TO VIEW AMERICA IN PURELY INSTRUMENTAL TERMS, A JOB FAIR WHERE THEY WILL FARE BETTER ECONOMICALLY THAN AT HOME. RENSHON SKEWERS THAT KIND OF WALL STREET JOURNAL AMERICANISM.

emotional attachment to their new country that is the only way they can truly acquire a new nationality. The challenge is actually double: everyone is born with some nationality—not only must the immigrant acquire his new nationality, his old nationality must shrink to a secondary attachment.

In Renshon’s view, we need to foster a love of America in immigrants. It is not enough for immigrants to view America in purely instrumental terms, a job fair where they will fare better economically than at home. He skewers that kind of

our society and culture that are negotiable, not theirs. That road led France to the burning *banlieues*.

Renshon cites the strength of ethnic pressure groups that lobby openly against America’s interests. (La Raza, MALDEF, CAIR come to mind; there are many others.) All this is bad enough. Two additional factors make the situation worse. Internally, federal and local governments’ casual acceptance of illegal immigration calls into question the integrity of the United States. How much loyalty can immigrants give a

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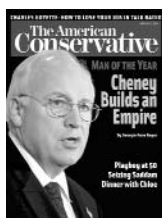
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country that can't be bothered to control its borders or enforce its laws? Externally, countries of emigration act to keep their emigrants' loyalty. Their homelands encourage them to retain their original citizenship even as they naturalize here. Cultural exchange programs are designed to preserve their emotional and cultural ties. Mexico in particular has enjoyed enormous success in influencing bilingual education curricula in the United States. History is taught, patriotic feeling is encouraged for Spanish learners in California schools, but it is Mexican history, not American.

After his exposition of the many problems that accompany dual citizenship, Renshon offers solutions. Here he stumbles. Whether he still holds a proposition-nation view of America, whether he shrinks from disruption, Renshon's proposals fall short of solutions. He would discourage several things but would prohibit none of them. To reform dual citizenship, we should discourage voting in foreign elections. We should dissuade American citizens from seeking or holding office abroad and from serving in foreign armed forces. Dual nationals who seek American public office should renounce their other citizenship. Yet this does not go far enough. All of these measures could be required by statute. Congress could overturn *Afroyim v. Rusk*, which effectively held—against previous precedent—that a naturalized citizen could only lose citizenship by renouncing it.

Renshon also has proposals to help immigrants become American. Here, unfortunately, he advocates expanding an already bloated welfare state and no reduction of legal immigration when the United States today has far more immigrants than we can practically assimilate. Renshon proposes government/business "welcome centers" for immigrants to be staffed by a public/private "Immigration Corps" to teach newcomers how to get along in America. He encourages English instruction—the need to keep English as our national language is a constant theme—but provided

by government at taxpayers' expense. He advocates a strong civics curriculum, a centralized effort that he believes would benefit immigrants and Americans alike. Finally, non-citizens should not vote in national, state, or local elections.

Professor Renshon's diagnosis of the dual citizenship problem is on point. He presents it in great and painstaking detail: notes are at the end of each chapter for ease of reference. He correctly identifies illegal immigration as a civic and social disaster. He knows the tide of illegal entry must be stopped—and reversed. Within its scope, *The 50% American* is very helpful. Still, there are other aspects of the immigration problem that he passes over and possible solutions he does not consider. One simple reform would make immigration to America, legal and illegal, far less attractive. The federal government misinterprets the 14th Amendment to require granting citizenship to any child born on American soil, no matter who his parents are or how they got here. Congress could easily deny automatic U.S. citizenship to children who have no American parent. Renshon never seriously considers the possibility of reducing or halting legal immigration. Given the crisis of assimilation he identifies, a pause is badly needed. Instead, Renshon seems to view America as simply a nation of immigrants, where constant immigrant influx is normal, despite our colonial settlement and the several immigration pauses in American history. Renshon calls for attachment to an American nationality, but other than a set of attitudes about freedom and work, he cannot really define what is distinctively American.

Stanley Renshon has given us the most complete analysis of the dual-citizenship aspect of America's immigration crisis that we have yet had. *The 50% American* is not, however, the roadmap for dealing with this most pressing of national issues. ■

Howard Sutherland is a lawyer in New York.

Princely Advice



Some pundits have been busy advising President Bush how to reverse his negative polls, but none of them, as far as I know, have suggested he read a

tiny, 85-page book published in 1532 called *The Prince*. Niccolo Machiavelli's brief treatise on Renaissance statecraft and power was actually written in 1513 and published posthumously. Although George W's presidency is, in my opinion, destroyed and unsalvageable, he still should read *The Prince* and ponder what might have been.

His presidency lies in ruins because he made precisely the kinds of mistakes that Machiavelli warned aspiring princes against. First of all, Bush allowed his administration to be hijacked by scheming staffers with agendas of their own. In chapter 22, the great man wrote, "When you see that the adviser thinks more of his own interests than of yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything, such a man will never make a good adviser, nor will you ever be able to trust him; because he who has the state of another in his hands ought never to think of himself, but always of his prince, and never pay any attention to matters in which the prince is not concerned."

Step forward Cheney, Wolfowitz, Feith, Perle, Abrams, and company. Seizing the opportunity in the aftermath of 9/11 and, with an eye to Halliburton and Israel's interests rather than their own country's, they cooked intelligence findings and persuaded the president to attack a country that posed no threat to the United States—a disastrous course of action.

Machiavelli, held by religious authorities for centuries to be the most evil man who ever lived, could have told Bush that the surest way to bring a nation to ruin is to try to remake someone else's

state: "It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous in conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new."

Invasion can only result in being hated. A conquered people will see their conquerors as coming to help themselves to their riches. Here's Niccolo once again: "A wise ruler always avoids hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be as long as he abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their

because the predominancy has been brought about either by astuteness or else by force, and both are distrusted by him who has been raised to power." In other words, if you invade Iraq, the only possible consequence will be the strengthening of Iran. How is a strong Iran in any way more to America's advantage than a strong Iraq? Please step forward, Ahmad Chalabi, and enlighten us on this particular matter.

And now for the good part, on how to avoid flatterers: "I do not wish to omit an important matter and an error from which princes protect themselves with difficulty if they are not very clever or if they do not have good judgement. And these are the flatterers which fill the courts; for men delight so much in their own concerns, deceiving themselves in this manner, that they protect themselves from this plague with difficulty." You'd think Machiavelli had George W. Bush, David Frum, and William Kristol in mind when he wrote the above 500

THERE WASN'T THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE THAT THE IRAQIS WOULD BELIEVE THE PROTESTATIONS THAT UNCLE SAM HAD COME TO BRING DEMOCRACY.

women." There wasn't the slightest chance that the Iraqis would believe the protestations of American officials that Uncle Sam had come to bring democracy. One country does not invade another for the sake of democracy. Iraqis are convinced that the Americans are there for the oil.

Moreover, not only does invasion result in a losing struggle to crush resistance at a ruinous cost of blood and treasure, Machiavelli warned princes that they had to ensure that they did nothing to build up the strength of their states' adversaries. "He who is the cause of another becoming powerful is ruined;

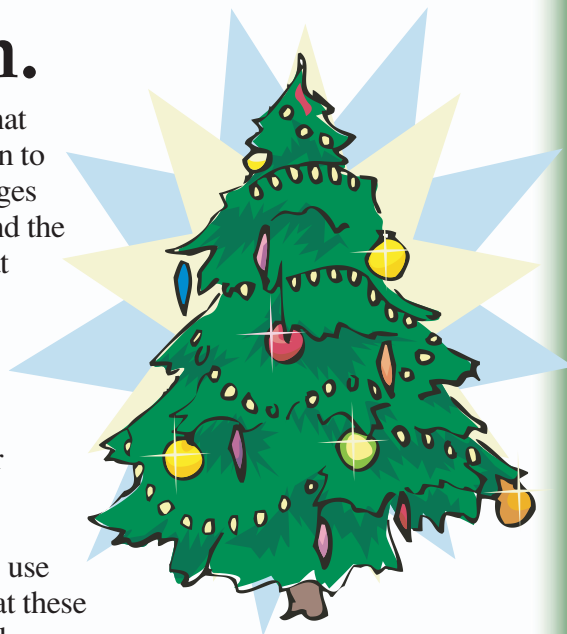
years ago. "For there is no other way to guard yourself against flattery than by making men understand that telling you the truth will not offend you."

The editor of *TAC* wrote two issues ago that Kristol and his organ were the vehicle that made the war in Iraq possible. I truly beg to disagree. Kristol was the waterboy who brought in the play to the quarterback from the sidelines, along with the oranges, and once the play lost yardage was the first to blame the quarterback. President Bush would have been better served reading *The Prince* than the self-interested nonsense of *The Weekly Standard*. ■

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